

MICHENER

THE
HOKUSAI
SKETCHBOOKS

THE HOKUSAI SKETCH- BOOKS

SELECTIONS FROM
THE **MANGA**



BY

JAMES A. MICHENER

TUTTLE

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BETWEEN the years 1814 and 1878 there was published in Japan a series of woodblock-printed volumes entitled "**Hokusai Manga**," or "Hokusai's Sketches from Life," which was destined to be one of the most popular art publications ever issued anywhere in the world. With its rich tapestry of life as it was lived in the boisterous Tokyo of the day and its magical evocation of the beauties of the Japanese countryside, it was an immediate best-seller in Japan, and then, upon the West's discovery of Japanese art, went on to win the hearts of people everywhere. While the critics have often disagreed on the artistic value of the "Manga"—with judgments ranging all the way from "a major art treasure" and "worthy of Rembrandt" to "an outpouring of sketches lacking organization or meaning"—the art lovers of the world, no less than the man in the street (for whom Hokusai worked), have felt the supreme vitality and life-loving force of the sketches and have always delighted in the fifteen volumes of the book.

It is from this amazing book—amazing both in execution and breadth of scope—that the 187 full-page plates and the hundreds of text decorations of the present volume have been assembled. For many years now the sketchbooks have been available only in costly or tattered form or else in inferior reproductions. Here, at last, they are given worthy format—with many original volumes examined to find the best pages for photographing and every effort made to reproduce the actual feel of the originals. The charmingly soft line of woodblock printing may well come as a surprise to readers more accustomed to the mechanical sharpness of most modern book illustration. Two plates printed from actual wood blocks provide a standard for judging the faithfulness of the three-color offset technique used for the rest of the plates.

Lending additional significance to the sketches themselves is the able editing of **James A. Michener**, author of "Tales of the South Pacific," "The Voice of Asia," "The Bridges at Toko-ri," "Sayonara," etc.,

(continued on back flap)

(continued from front flap)

and a leading collector and student of Japanese prints. Having made a masterly survey of the Japanese woodblock print in "The Floating World," he now turns with manifest love and enthusiasm to an appraisal of one of his favorite examples of that remarkable art form. In his selection and meaningful organization of the plates, as well as in his brilliant essay and informative captions, he provides new insight into the quality of Hokusai's art in general and the "Manga" sketchbooks in particular. Impartially, he points out Hokusai's defects as well as his towering stature among artists of all times and places, and finds in the man's astounding vitality and inquiring mind an answer to the riddle of his often technically defective art but always-increasing popularity.

Especially rewarding for the student and connoisseur of Japanese prints is Mr. Michener's final section on Forerunners, which concerns the creative process as manifested in Japan, particularly as regards legitimate borrowing and downright plagiarism, and points the way to a fuller understanding of Japanese art. And throughout the book, both in Hokusai's sketches and Mr. Michener's writing, the student of Japan will find a treasure house of information concerning Japanese history, customs, superstitions, psychology, life, and pleasures. Botany, zoology, architecture, agriculture, astronomy—all these and many more subjects are touched upon, to create a veritable encyclopedia of Japan. And, through the captions—themselves the result of wide research into little-known subjects—the lover of the "Manga" is for the first time able to understand what Hokusai was seeking to depict, and why.

But this is far from being a book for only art historians and students. First and foremost is it the epitome of all that has kept the "Manga" alive and loved for over a hundred years. It is the distillation of man's love of life, of a down-to-earth approach to art, it is the revealed heart of the man who in many ways might well be called the Leonardo da Vinci of the Orient; it is, in Mr. Michener's editorship, the tribute of an able commentator and, in Hokusai's imperishable art, the sincere record of a great artist whose abundance of life force still lives in every line he drew.

北齊漫畫選集

北齊漫畫選集



*Self-portrait of Hokusai
as an old man.
From a brush-drawing.*

JAMES A. MICHENER

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SELECTIONS FROM THE MANGA

Published by the
Charles E. Tuttle Company
of Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan
with editorial offices at
15 Edogawa-cho Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo

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Library of Congress
Catalog Card No. 58-9983

First edition, 1958
Fourth printing, 1959

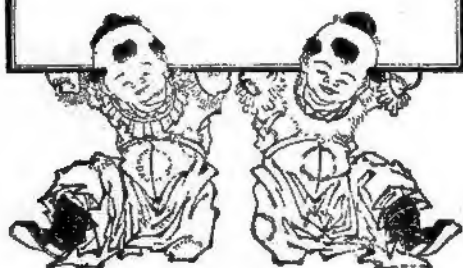
Book design & typography by M. Weatherby
Layout of decorations by M. Kuwata

Text set & printed by Toppan Printing Co., Tokyo
Plates engraved & printed by Kyodo Printing Co., Tokyo
Binding by Okamoto Bindery, Tokyo

Manufactured in Japan

To
MARI YORIKO SABUSAWA

who finds in life
the same rollicking joy
as did her countryman
Katsushika Hokusai
when he drew the sketches
in this book



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ESSAY



ON THE HOKUSAI MANGA

HOKUSAI'S *Manga* is a work of such Gargantuan proportions that one's reactions to it are apt to be more personal than objective. Some critics have condemned its fifteen crowded volumes as "an outpouring of sketches lacking organization or meaning." Others, impressed by the art and vitality of the sketches, have judged them to be "a major art treasure."

My own reaction has certainly been subjective, especially since the airplane in which I was carrying the completed manuscript for this book from America to the publishers in Japan crashed into the Pacific Ocean. Fortunately, all passengers and crew members were saved, but my manuscript and the make-up pages illustrating it were lost, and that was a grievous blow.

But there could have been no finer therapy for me, in the days following the accident, than the reconstruction of this manuscript, because it dealt with Hokusai, and if there is any artist in the world who has caught the exact emotions that possessed me when I looked out of the door of the ditched plane and saw the friends who had preceded me struggling in the ocean—if there is any artist who has depicted men and women tangled up in life—it is the man who drew the teeming, tangled pages for the *Manga* sketchbooks.

Years ago I had decided that one day I would do some work on the *Manga*. Now, because my near escape from death had given me a new sense of identity with this tremendously vital work, I was eager to recapitulate what I had only a few weeks before completed. I have never worked on any manuscript with more joy.

This present version cannot be the same as the one that was lost, for many irreplaceable quotations from other writers went down with the plane. But that it is a better book because I now know Hokusai better, I have not the slightest doubt. Today I appreciate anew his abounding vitality; I have new respect for the tremendous persistence of his life pulse. To what artistic subject could a man who, by all the laws of probability, might well be dead apply himself more appropriately than to Hokusai? I can think only of Pieter Breughel, whose magnificent affirmation of life is the European counterpart of Hokusai's, but since I prefer to work in Asian fields, Hokusai is my natural companion. It is with these ideas in mind that I offer the following observations on one of the most challenging aspects of Hokusai's work. I do not consider the fifteen volumes of the *Manga* his finest work,



nor to be unstintedly praised, nor even entirely satisfactory; but I do consider them a treasure house of life and the subject above all others that I would prefer to deal with at this stage of my own life.

In 1814 the citizens of Tokyo and Nagoya, two large cities on the eastern seaboard of Japan's major island, were offered an inconspicuous, flexible, paper-bound book approximately 15.6 centimeters wide by 22.7 centimeters high. The book's title was *Hokusai Manga* (spelled *Mangwa* in the older, nonphonetic romanization). The name Hokusai identified it as the work of one of the most popular artists of the day, while the word *manga*—it has been variously rendered in English as “random sketches,” “cartoons,” “sketches from life,” “drawing things just as they come,” and the like—immediately classified the book as one of sketches. In the first printing, this title was apparently given only on the front cover, although later editions were to use the blank inside front cover for adding a formal title page, while the inside back cover advertised a book by Hokuman, a now-forgotten pupil of the book's author. Leaving aside these covers, the book contained only fifty-four pages, two of which were taken up by a flowery preface. That left fifty-two pages for the body of the book, but these were both startling and delightful, and the reception given them during the first weeks of publication assured them of contemporary popularity far beyond the author's anticipations. Thus the *Manga* was launched upon an immortality whose richness was to grow generation by generation.

The citizen of Tokyo—then called Edo and its inhabitants Edokko—who first purchased this little book found that he had acquired a treasure house of sketches unlike any he had previously seen, although both he and his grandparents before him had often bought similar-looking books of pictures from Edo booksellers. The difference that marked this present volume was the wide variety of pictures it offered, and there could be no better introduction to the *Manga* than to leaf through this first volume with its first purchaser in order to capture the visual delight that greeted him on that afternoon in 1814.

The first plate in the book showed, prophetically, the traditional happy old married couple of Japanese folklore. This must immediately have struck the purchaser of the book as a felicitous opening. (This sketch is reproduced in this volume as Plate 39.) The printed sketch was done in black ink and



gray wash, highlighted with a pale flesh tint which made human faces realistic. Reproduction was by means of woodblocks, which had long been standard for making such books; and if one were forced to judge solely from this first print, the *Manga* was not going to be much different from the hundreds of other picture books which had preceded it.

But when our first purchaser turned to plates two and three, he came upon a surprise, for these two pages drew him into an entirely new world: they were squirming with little sketches of human beings, twenty-three persons in all. There were noisy children playing games, studious children learning to draw, an old scholar with a foundling baby, goddesses, a man riding a turtle, a fisherman, a warrior, the seven gods of good luck, and a drunkard drinking from a huge bowl. It was these two pages that launched the *Manga* on its unique, flamboyant, utterly delightful way.

The next eleven pairs of facing pages continued this rich offering of human beings. They were presented in all sorts of occupations and all conceivable poses, and invariably with good humor. From these first, cyclonic pages we reproduce in this book several which have always held the reader's deep affection: Plate 7 shows women bathing; Plate 8 displays a variety of activity unusual even for this series; Plate 14 shows a robust waterfront brawl; while Plate 21 summarizes the activities of Buddhist priests.

This procession of intertwining little figures, so characteristic of the *Manga*, was then interrupted by one of the finest and most poetic prints in the series, our Plate 22, which shows men whose faces are hidden by umbrellas and rain hats. This print must have struck the first reader of the *Manga* with its extraordinary grace and poetry, as it does us today, and with it the reader in 1814 was launched into another aspect of the *Manga*: its occasional glimpses into a world of high art and rare beauty.

But the bewildering variety offered by this first volume was only beginning. Soon the reader came upon fascinating sketches of animals (Plate 40), birds, insects (Plate 42), and reptiles (Plate 41). Then, with great delicacy, grasses and flowers were depicted (Plate 62), followed immediately by fish and crustaceans (Plate 43).

In a sense, these crowded pages of animal and floral life were in the same style as the jammed pages of human beings, but next came an abrupt change, which provided two spacious landscapes in the form of double-page



spreads or continuous diptychs, a portion of one of which is shown in Plate 80. Then quickly the style reverted to discontinuous pages filled with small sketches, this time of grass (Plate 60), trees, roof studies (Plate 168), and villages. The book ended with a page divided into four pictures, each of which showed a different type of moving water (Plate 78).

The first volume of the *Manga* was an astonishing performance. Without organization, central idea, or any apparent logical concept governing its selection of material, it simply provided a catchall of sketches, some being of the highest artistic merit. Its principal characteristic was then what it is today: it was a joy to study.

The book did, however, contain a preface which has subsequently become famous, since it provides our only clue as to how the *Manga* originated. Like the fourteen prefaces which were to follow, it was composed in an erudite, literary style that implied more than it said directly. It was written by Hanshu Sanjin, a minor artist and calligrapher of the city of Nagoya, and reads:

The various emotions of mankind—joy, anger, grief, pleasure—appear readily both on their faces and in their forms. But also do mountains, rivers, grasses, trees each have their own special qualities. Birds, beasts, insects, fish—each have their own peculiar spirit.

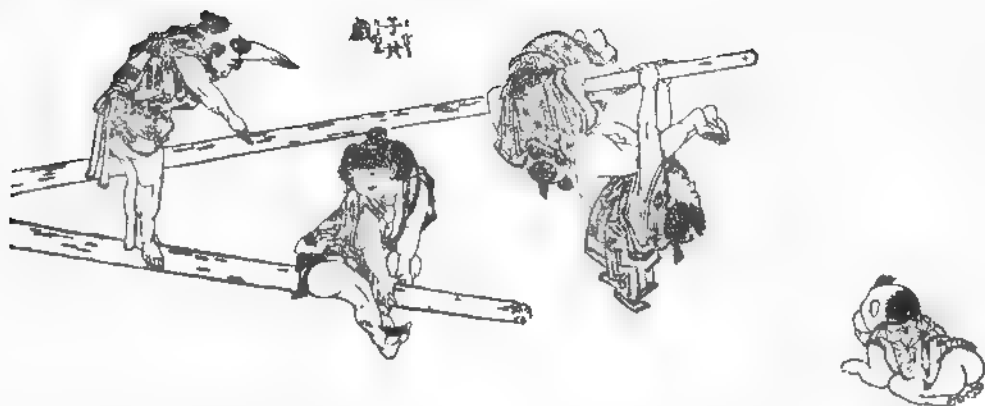
There are indeed many who see these objects, enjoy and take pleasure in them. But all things perish, and times change. If one wishes to preserve the form of these enjoyable and pleasurable objects for all time and all lands, what means are there?

Painting is, indeed, the instrument for transmitting that spirit. But if the painting is not infused with divine skill, it can hardly succeed in transmitting that spirit.

Master Hokusai's success in this respect is well known to the world. This autumn the master happened to visit the Western Provinces and stopped over at our city [Nagoya]. We all met together with the painter Gekkotei Bokusen [Utamasa II, well known Nagoya artist, pupil of Hokusai's, and collator of Hokusai's later work] at the latter's residence, it being a very joyous occasion. And there over three hundred sketches of all kinds were made—from immortals, Buddhas, scholars, and women on down to birds, beasts, grasses, and trees, the spirit of each captured fully by the brush.

In general, it may be said of modern artists that those who copy reality are lacking in depth and taste, and those who paint idealistically are often lacking in elevation of spirit. But Hokusai's paintings are sharp, clear, and penetrating, both in form and spirit. All things are painted as though really alive, and one can but joy and revel in them. Ah, who else of our painters can give one such inspiration! Those who really wish to learn to paint can hardly do better than take this book as their guide. And it is for this reason that the work is called the *Manga*, after the master's own plan.

The fourth paragraph of this preface has been taken by some critics to



mean that the sketches for the first volume of the *Manga*, and for several of the subsequent volumes as well, were the joint effort of Hokusai and a group of his admirers. This group probably included those mentioned above plus several more artists, each of whom had taken part of Hokusai's name as his own: Hokutei and Hoku-un, of Nagoya, and, for the second and third volumes, also Hokusen and Hokkei, of Edo. It is therefore possible that any given sketch from the opening volumes—such as those already referred to—was not actually done by Hokusai but by one of his pupils. There can be no doubt, however, that the bulk of the work and all of the concept was his.

This interesting book that we have been describing—and likewise each of the volumes to follow—was put together as shown in the four-page insert opposite.

Who was Hokusai?

In 1760 a boy was born into a lower-middle-class Edo family and given the name Kawamura Tokitaro and, possibly because he was an expendable younger son, was soon put out for adoption into an important artisan family, where he took the name Nakajima Tetsuzo and spent several years apprenticed as a mirror-maker. During this time he learned how to engrave the backs of metal mirrors, an art which he later adapted to the cutting of woodblocks. He thus became the only classic woodblock artist who had himself ever cut blocks, although most modern artists in this medium now insist upon doing both their own carving and printing.

He interrupted his apprenticeship to become an errand boy, then a book-peddler, then a cheap novelist, a hawker of calendars, a merchant of red peppers, and an itinerant painter of advertising banners. His artistic career began in earnest when, at the age of eighteen, he joined the workshop of a leading Edo woodblock artist, the gifted Katsukawa Shunsho (1726-92), who, following the Japanese custom, shortly gave the promising young man a formal art name—Katsukawa Shunro—that advertised his relationship to his master.

In the normal course of events, Katsukawa Shunro should have applied himself to the job of drawing the formalized scenes of theatrical life in which his master excelled, but young Shunro had an inquisitive mind that projected him into very un-Shunsho-like studies, and after a long discipleship of almost fifteen years he broke abruptly with his master's style, threw

INSERT
containing Plates 1, 2, and 3

This Insert makes clear the most striking feature of the arrangement of a Manga volume: while facing pages, especially those forming a single, continuous diptych were the visual unit (for example, the elephant diptych of Plates 1-2), the printing unit was formed not of these two pages but of two pages which appeared in the bound volume back to back (for example, the elephant's rear of Plate 2 and the acrobats of Plate 3).

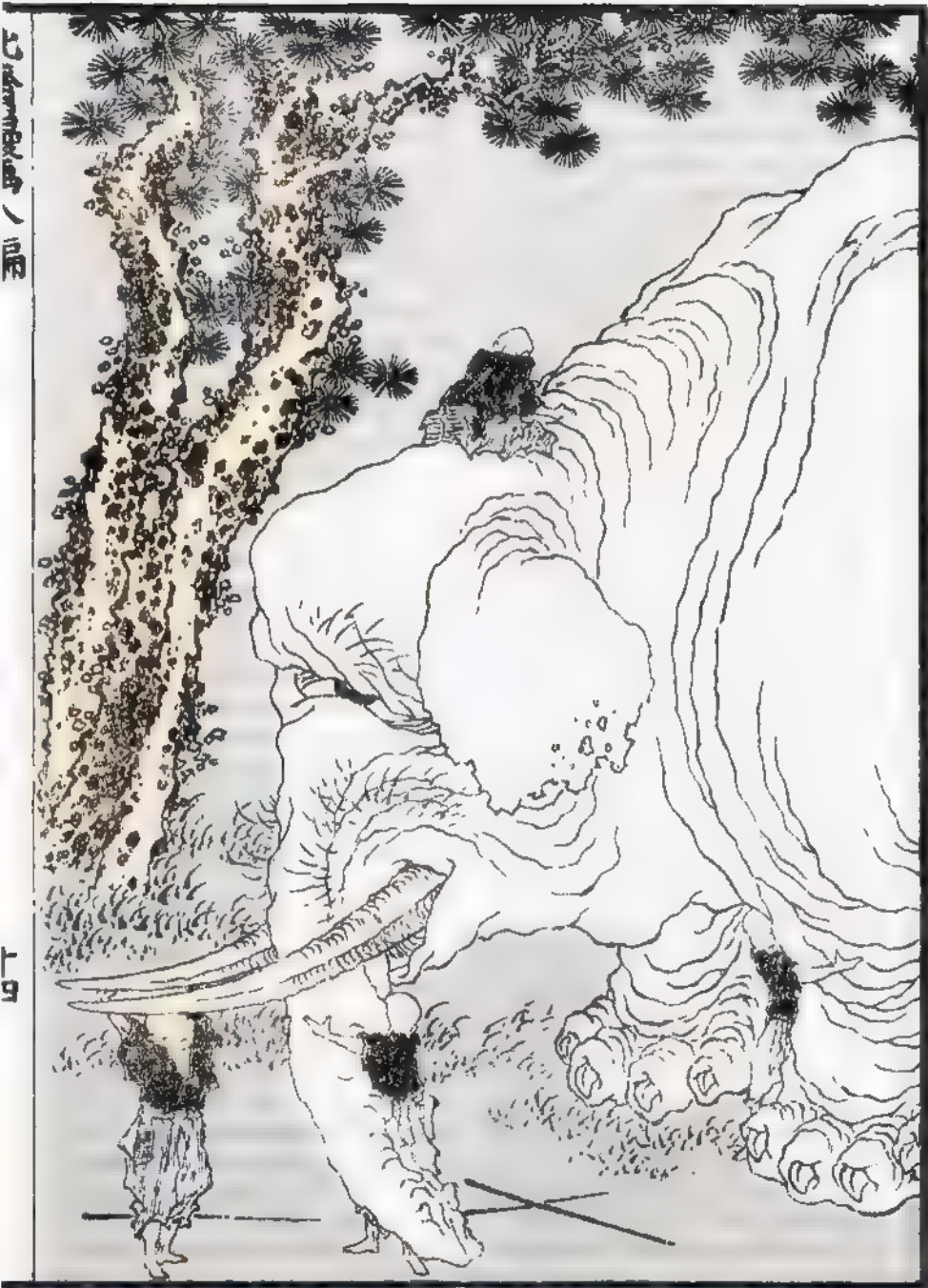
The block was given a number, which was carved onto the space between the two halves. The resulting double page, which was printed on only one side, was then folded along the center, printed side out, and, as may be seen at the outer edge of this present page, the folded edge thus became part of the outer edge of the finished book; the two loose ends were then gathered together and fastened into the spine of the book, where they were stitched, along with the loose ends of all the other double pages, by a silk thread. (This book is put together in much the same way.)

Thus the elephant-acrobat wood block which forms our Plates 2 and 3, being the 13th printing unit in Volume VIII (excluding the 2-page preface, which was numbered separately), bore the words "Hokusai Manga Volume VIII" and, some distance below, the numeral "13." To each of the plates in this book, excluding the present three, we have added these original numbers, printed in small type at the lower edge of the pictures, so that the elephant half of the printing unit would become VIII-13-L and the acrobat half VIII-13-R, "R" and "L" indicating the right- and left-hand sides

of the wood block. Similarly, and remembering that a Japanese book begins at what Westerners would call the back, the front half of the elephant becomes VIII-14-R, that is, the right half of the succeeding wood block.

This Insert also provides an excellent comparison of printing processes. Plate 1 is reproduced by the three-color offset-lithography process used for plates throughout this anthology. Plates 2 and 3, however, are done in the traditional way and probably look very much as they did in the original volume in 1817. Under the supervision of the well-known woodblock artist Toshi Yoshida, the three blocks—black, gray, and pink—have been recarved by Hambel Okura, who has been designated an Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government, and hand-printed by Heihachi Komatsu, both using almost exactly the same materials and methods as those of Hokusai's day. To provide further opportunity for comparison, the page that faces the acrobats in the Manga appears later in this anthology as Plate 30. The page size and layout of this insert are identical with those of the original Manga, as also are the picture areas of all the plates in this anthology.

The elephant sketch illustrates a popular fable still known to every Japanese from his grade-school textbooks: A group of blind men go to examine their first elephant. One touches the trunk and exclaims: "Why, an elephant is like a snake." Another, its tail: "It's like a rope." Another, its flank: "Like a wall." . . . Moral: Don't form judgments on insufficient evidence.









down the name he had been given, and launched forth as a unique and fiery artist.

Adopting in turn a total of more than fifty different names—he did not take the name by which we know him, Katsushika Hokusai, until he was forty-six years old—he matured slowly, and at the age of sixty had accomplished little of the work for which he is now famous. Many of the fecund series of color prints which the world today treasures were designed when he was in his seventies, and several of the finest when he was eighty. He was doing some of his strongest work when he died at eighty-nine, and insofar as longevity in art is concerned, his nearest rivals are Michelangelo, Titian, Verdi, and Sibelius, but the creative span of each was years shorter than Hokusai's.

The manner of Hokusai's life could be termed a tragedy, except that he was oblivious to it. He married twice, with no luck, and had five children, four of whom were no consolation whatever. The irresponsible escapades of first his son and later his grandson plunged him into financial difficulties from which he was never able to extricate himself, and in the years when he should have been at the height of his powers and an honored citizen of Edo, he was a fugitive from debt-collectors, hiding out in a rural hovel from which he used to walk many miles into the city, sneaking into his publisher's after dark to check upon the prints which were later to bedazzle the world.

During a hopelessly chaotic lifetime he resided in ninety-three different houses, abandoning them in turn when they became either too dirty to clean or too burdened with back rent. He once joked that it was cheaper to move than to clean up. His wastrel life induced a stroke at the age of sixty-eight, but he cured himself with an old folklore medication and moved on to his masterworks. Ten years later his home burned and all his notes and sketches were destroyed, prompting him to observe: "I came into the world without much." To forestall well-wishing friends he posted this warning: "No compliments. No presents." At the age of seventy-six he lamented that during an especially cold winter he owned but one thin garment.

If the prolific pages of the *Manga* display an extraordinary vigor, there need be no mystery as to how this was derived. It came from Hokusai's prodigal life, for although he eschewed drink and overeating, in all other respects he was Gargantuan. At the age of seventy-five he wrote, in a



postlude to a book of sketches, a statement which has been held to epitomize his life:

From the age of six I had a mania for drawing the forms of things. By the time I was fifty I had published an infinity of designs; but all I produced before the age of seventy is not worth taking into account. At seventy-three I learned a little about the real structure of nature, of animals, plants, trees, birds, fishes, and insects. In consequence, when I am eighty I shall have made still more progress; at ninety I shall penetrate the mystery of things; at a hundred I shall certainly have reached a marvelous stage; and when I am a hundred and ten everything I do, be it a dot or a line, will be alive. I beg those who live as long as I to see if I do not keep my word.

He signed these words with his last, and most appropriate, name: Old Man Mad about Drawing.

He did find one solace in life other than his drawing. His youngest daughter, Oei—because of her oddly shaped face he called her Chin-chin, a term of endearment for a Pekingese dog—had real talent and became an artist whose paintings are prized today, but her early marriage proved disastrous and she retired from public life to act as guardian for her crotchety father. Descriptions of their household have come down to us. Indifferent to accumulating filth, Hokusai sat in a cold room, huddled over his drawing board, while Oei, who loved to tell fortunes, worked at her own projects. If visitors called to have their futures read, Oei would run out to some nearby shop for a few amenities and would then entertain the guests while her father ignored them. Once Baiko, a leading actor and a fastidious dandy, visited Hokusai but found the menage so objectionable that he spread a covering on the floor before he would consent to sit. This so enraged Hokusai that he refused to acknowledge the presence of the popular idol, and it was not until Baiko returned with more humility that Hokusai would discuss with him a portrait, whose fee was badly needed in the household.

It was to Oei that Hokusai cried in anguish from his deathbed: "If heaven could only grant me ten more years! Only five more, and I would have become a real painter." Earlier, while composing the death poem required by Japanese custom, he had perhaps seen himself with great clarity: "Even as a ghost my spirit will want to roam the fields of summer." It had been doing so for the last thirty years of his amazing life.

But an even better picture of the salty old man has been preserved in a letter he wrote to a friend shortly before his death: "King Emma, the



Lord of Hell, being very old, is retiring from business, so he has built a pretty country home and asks me to go and paint a kakemono for him. I am thus obliged to leave, and when I go I shall carry my drawings with me. I am going to take a room at the corner of Hell Street, and shall be happy to see you whenever you pass that way.—HOKUSAI.”

When the first volume of the *Manga* reached Nagoya and Edo bookstalls, it became an immediate success and additional printings were required. It must have become quickly apparent to Hokusai, or more likely to his publishers, that this pleasant success was the kind of good fortune that could be easily repeated. After all, the book required no plan, no careful preparation. Any sequel need merely offer more of the same jumbled, fascinating sketches; so before long Hokusai was engaged in the preparation of additional volumes.

Following is a brief index to each of these volumes, with the consensus of modern experts as to when each was published, plus comment on the various styles of drawing used. And since so much of what we know about the *Manga* has been deduced from the prefaces, and because they appear to be unavailable elsewhere in English, they are printed here in full, in a spirited translation provided especially for this anthology by Dr. Richard Lane. Through them the reader will catch something of the mood that must have caught the first purchasers of these books. Furthermore, the preface to Volume VII is a graceful example of Japanese prose. In several of the prefaces Hokusai is called Taito, a name he had assumed in 1811.

These summaries should be studied in conjunction with the Breakdown of Plates on pages 276-77. Thus the principles which guided the construction of this anthology and the steps taken to insure fair representation of the styles of each volume of the *Manga* will become apparent.

VOLUME I. 1814. Outstandingly characteristic of this volume are the famous plates crowded with small figures. These set the style for the series and are perhaps the best-loved work therein. Also contains animals, birds, insects, reptiles, fish; the first landscapes; grasses, trees, houses, villages; and the studies of moving water. The style of both drawing and design tends to be hard, although certain landscapes show a fine, free movement. The preface to this volume has already been quoted on page 13.



VOLUME II. 1815. A well-diversified volume starting with phoenixes and dragons and ending with numerous studies of nature: flowers, birds, animals, fish, ocean scenes, and imaginary beasts; also amusing portraits of religious people; workmen, masks, and the first full-page studies of historical figures. The style is similar to that of Volume I. The preface is signed Rokujuen Shujin, the pen name of Ishikawa Masamochi (1754-1830), noted Edo poet, scholar, and novelist (his *The Craftsman of Hida* was illustrated by Hokusai and was also one of the first Japanese novels to be translated, into German in 1877), and son of the great woodblock artist Ishikawa Toyonobu (1711-85):

Although I am not especially prone to praise, upon looking through this little volume I clapped my hands and turned my face up in respect, indeed finding a great deal to startle me herein.

The beasts that run in the wilderness, the fish that swim in sea or river, the birds, the insects, even the different varieties of trees and grasses—all are found here to one's heart's content. I really think them masterpieces.

The illustrations of people are of particular fascination: the graceful figures of high personages, the harsh figures of peasants, the formal figure of the Shinto priest, the Buddhist priest's elevated pose, the scholar's knowing face, the doctor's self-satisfied visage, the harlot's voluptuous form, the passionate lover, the stooped old man, the energetically creeping infant, the rice-field worker, the cart-puller, the boatman, the horse-driver, the wet nurse, the midwife, the manservant, the lady in waiting, the dyer, the roof-thatcher, the blacksmith, the tilemaker, the wall-painter, the merchant, the diviner, the woodcutter, the girl porter, the sumo wrestler; scenes of the hairdresser and cook, of sending-off and of returning—all kinds of people in all kinds of situations, each just as though alive and engaged in his work.

"And who is this painter?" one may ask. It is indeed none other than the master Hokusai. Those who scurry to collect his pictures are truly as numerous as the stars that all face toward the North Star (*Hokushin*, i.e., Hokusai) and as plentiful as the rice plants that bow to the winds that blow over the rice fields of Katsushika [place of Hokusai's birth and the surname he adopted as an artist].

Growing old, I've become foolish and jaundiced, my tastes quite the opposite of the crowd's. But I agree with them on this one point, for the master's pictures never fail to move me to exclaim in joy: "How wonderful! How fascinating!" Grown old and world-weary, I find it strangely gratifying thus to feel the same emotions as the man on the street.

Hokusai's pictures are indeed indescribable and peerless; however long one looks, one is ever inspired.

VOLUME III. 1815. Another well-diversified volume featuring rice culture, wrestling, dancing, and technical drawings; also historical, grotesque, and mythological figures; nature studies and landscapes. Occasionally the style becomes freer than in the preceding volumes. The preface is signed Shoku-



sanjin, the pen name of Ota Nampo (1749-1823), another famous Edo poet and novelist:

It is easy to paint demons and deities which no one has seen, but difficult to paint ordinary people near at hand. An ancient flint-and-steel or poem-bag is hardly the equal of a newly made article by our own Marukawa or Echikawa; and the old formal *shichi-go-san* dinner is hardly up to Yaozen's modern feast.

Here we have Master Hokusai of Katsushika. All that he sees, all that he imagines, all these, in full form and full spirit, issue without fail from his facile brush. And these are things from daily life: one cannot fake them; they appear before our very eyes; they take us by surprise.

Thus do the landscapes of Ma Yuan and Kuo Hsi [Sung masters] fall below the "Three Scenes" in a modern peep show; and the Genji paintings of the great Chieda and Tsunenori [tenth-century Japanese masters mentioned in the *Tale of Genji*] would be nonplused by the color prints of Edo ukiyo-e.

One can only reaffirm the superior worldly wisdom of modern man, and reflect upon the simpleness of the ancients.

VOLUME IV. 1816. Dominant are the excellent nature studies; also mythological figures, swimmers, monks. The style, as explained in the preface, is cursive and free, with fine utilization of heavy wash. The preface is by Saeda Shigeru (d. 1826 or 1832), using the pen name of Kozan Gyo-o, author of several historical novels illustrated by Hokusai:

It has been said that in making explanations nothing is greater than words, and in preserving forms nothing is as fine as painting. How true! In showing the appearance of the ancients and the tastefulness of old objects, here lies the wonder of painting.

Now indeed Professor Katsushika Taito, his paintings replete with skill, has achieved great fame, and those who seek his pictures are so numerous that the price of paper in Edo has gone up as a consequence. Thus his brush is never at rest from orders, and his pupils have grieved the paucity of copybooks. The master has taken note of this and, whenever he could find time, has made random sketches of everything from landscapes and figures to animals and utensils. Publishing these, he has distributed them among his pupils, that they might prove a "ladder" for beginners.

This gathering together of the fruit of his labor has resulted in the present volume, the fourth, which I have been requested to preface. Upon examining the volumes carefully, I have noted that the first three were detailed drawings, very close to reality, whereas the fourth consists of impressionistic sketches [*so-gai*], revealing the true wonders of his draftsmanship.

Now there are three aspects to painting. *Ga* is the generic term for painting, that is to say, the cursive [*so*] form. *Zu* is the fluent [*gyo*] form. *Sha* is the formal [*shin*] form. But the first three volumes were "formal" or "fluent," whereas the fourth is sketched in "cursive" style. I was rather puzzled by the variation from the usual order. The master explained, saying: "The ancients had the idea when they said: 'Those who cannot stand, cannot walk; those who cannot walk, cannot run.' 'To stand' is the



'formal' style. 'To walk' is the 'fluent' style. 'To run' is the 'cursive' style. This is the order I too have followed."

Ah, thus does the master guide his disciples! His fervor renders him a true teacher. Feeling strongly the truth of his words, I have written the preface to this volume

VOLUME V. 1816. Architecture and mythology dominate; also the first large view of Fuji. Style varies from a blueprint accuracy in the architectural drawings to a bold Chinese use of draperies in the figures. The preface is by Rokujuen, who also wrote the preface to Volume II:

The plum blossoms of Umenoya, the cherry blossoms of Suda Dike, the wisterias of Kamedo, the clover of Yanagishima, the chrysanthemums of Terashima—these five are the famous sites of Katsushika [Hokusai's birthplace, on the northeast outskirts of Edol. In spring or fall they are in full bloom, and the people gather in great noisy crowds, so that the roads are barely passable.

The master Hokusai has from the old days lived in this area, but his name has become even more famous than these scenic wonders. Of late, the work called the *Manga* has been printed from blocks and published, and the public has greatly praised it, so that year by year the number has increased. Now five volumes have appeared, so that they may now well be counted as the Five Wonders of Katsushika!

Truly is his brushwork marvelous, excelling even the lovely blooms of nature. Those who have not seen the splendor of this blossoming book can hardly understand its beauty.

VOLUME VI. 1817. Predominantly games; also horsemanship and several good mythological figures. The style is undistinguished. The preface is by Imai Shokusanjin Bumpo (1768-1829), Edo poet and pupil of the Shokusanjin who wrote the preface to Volume III:

Extravagant it may indeed sound to speak of "the horse in a picture coming out every evening to eat rice-cakes" or "the deer in a painting coming out every evening to eat rice-dumplings"! And, as a matter of fact, to achieve that degree of skill in verisimilitude is quite beyond the comprehension of the amateur painter. That kind of "dumpling" is really a job for the professional confectioner!

Here now we have the paintings of the master Taito, replete in grace, vitality, technique. His portrayals of reality are truly the equal of the "horse eating dumplings"; his detailed depiction of all things under the sun would make even Wang Wei and Li Ssu-hsun [early T'ang masters] scratch their dumpling heads.

We may add that the success of these *Manga* among the public has proved a veritable "cornucopia-dumpling" for the publisher too! And when these dumplings are brought forth from the warm oven, the three in a platter [normal number of a dumpling batter] do not make just one group, but the three are doubled and here we have Volume Six, to which I've been asked to add a preface. Thus solicited, I'm really in a pudding, but have written away just as the morsels fell from my mouth.

Recorded by the dumpling fancier, saké-hater, and poor drinker, Shokusanjin, in the Bumpo Hall.



VOLUME VII. 1817. Almost exclusively landscapes. Admirable free style. Preface by Shikitei Samba (1776-1822), one of the major novelists and humorists of the day:

Yesterday it was the ferry at Fukagawa, wide Hirohata, and the shrine of Yawata, where we payed homage to the archer Tametomo. Then we are led on today to Hashiba and the moor of Asaji, to hear the crying cuckoo. And we are the more readily drawn out by our friend's urgent coaxing, for only to view the livelong day through our own window is too lonely.

As we take our leave, the summits of the trees are leafed in rich verdure; the sky too, all azure, across it the white clouds grouped in all shapes and sizes, the forms they take truly curious—"What strange peaks!" as someone once described them.

Thus as we wander vaguely on, we pass by Mt. Matsuchi, and crossing over Saruhashi [Monkey Bridge], the concerted voices of the field cranes echo to the very clouds. And we know we have arrived at Sakurada in Owari Province.

The snow of Mt. Tsukuba shines forth with the morning sun of Higane Pass, as though sprinkled with gold. The pines of Suminoe are hidden in the mists of Miho Bay—those pines of untold age. Then too we lose our courage at the towering bridge of Kumeji, and the giant rhubarb blossoms of Akita dazzle our eyes.

Thus do we realize the splendid vastness of the universe. We need only view these blooms: the tinted maples, the moon, the snow—the views of spring and autumn; to this fount indeed they all gather, and we can hardly describe them, they are so marvelous, so happy. And the brimful Ono Falls resound now in our ears.

And as we rouse ourselves, we find we are back by the window of our simple house. And the entrance to that wondrous land was but this little book we used as a pillow.

VOLUME VIII. 1817. This volume contains a high proportion of famous sketches, well diversified in subject matter. Probably the most popular single volume. Mythology, architecture, technical drawings of weaving machines, acrobats, the elephant, masks, fat men and thin men, studies of filial piety, and the series of tiny landscapes. The style is equally varied, but a fine, free cursive manner predominates. Preface by Kozan, who also wrote that of Volume IV:

The master Taito has had from early youth a passion for painting. Eating and painting, these are his sole activities. Finally, forming his own individual "Katsushika style," he has become famous throughout the land. And many have flocked to become pupils of his art.

To them the master has simply said: "There can be no teacher in painting. All you need do is copy reality." But his pupils were hardly comforted by this statement, and someone who had heard it spoke reprovingly to the master, saying: "You are the founder of the Katsushika school. Naturally, those who feel drawn to your style wish to emulate it. But where else are they to find a teacher in this? With even the eyesight of Li Lou [he could see a hair at a hundred paces] or the skill of the master Kung-



shu-tzu, how could one draw a perfect circle or square without using ruler or compass? If the students who flock to your gates are not given some kind of model from which to copy, they can hardly master the Katsushika style. Is this not clear?"

And the master agreed that this was true; and thus henceforth in his spare time he has drawn designs of everything he saw—landscapes, human figures, birds and animals, trees and flowers, edifices, utensils—and publishing these, he has given them to his pupils, the present volume forming the eighth in the series.

Although asked for a preface, since I know nothing of painting, I can hardly lecture on the subject. Thus I have simply related how these little volumes came about and made this take the place of my preface.

VOLUME IX. 1817. History and mythology dominate; also fat men, landscape studies, technical drawings. The style is undistinguished and apt to be a bit florid. Preface by Rokujuen, author of prefaces to Volumes II and V:

The work called the *Manga* has to date appeared in print nine times, it seems. This time the artist has attempted to draw even more curious forms—not only the ordinary scenes of China and Japan, but also the old battle scenes we hear of in tales—selecting with care and painting with his ever-skilled brush.

Opening the volume we are truly as though in that actual world of old! Our emotions are at times stirred to glory, chilled with fear, startled by beauty, roused to laughter—all these emotions we feel with such inexpressible delight! And the greatness of the master's brushwork ranges even beyond comparison with the greatly praised warriors of old. This is because the warriors of old, though great in name, have no power to appear great before us unless it be through the grace of his brush.

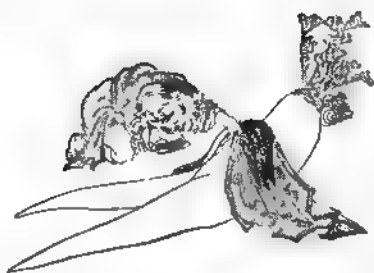
Thus urged by Kakumaruya [Edo publisher of the *Manga*], I've taken up my brush for this preface, but, startled by the resounding of string against the archer's armor, I've been unable really to write, so filled with terror: just understand my unspoken admiration!

VOLUME X. 1819. Grotesqueries and the past dominate; plus several fine landscapes. Many of these sketches are excellently drawn in Hokusai's mature style. Preface by Heiroduai Rojin, early-nineteenth-century Edo poet and calligrapher:

I am a man of little talent; of the many arts there's hardly one I can do well. When I watch, for instance, a really skilled player of chess or football, I can only think "How wonderful!" and feel envious, deploring my own inability.

But most of all I regret my inability to paint well, and I feel a boundless envy for those who can. Particularly in reading books, when buildings or utensils are mentioned, how wonderful to be able to demonstrate "This looks this way; that looks that way"—to be able to take words as they appear so vaguely in writing and to translate them into pictures that all can understand.

Now the *Hokusai Manga* has reached its tenth volume in print and has proved vastly popular. Looking through it, I cannot but feel a thousand regrets at my own inability.



I only hope that the gentlemen of our world will not take too hard their own inability when they try to emulate the master. They don't have a chance!

VOLUME XI. Undated, but about 1834. This volume has a lower percentage of memorable plates than any other in the series. Some interesting drawings of wrestlers, calligraphers, and guns. The style is often downright bad and never distinguished except in the drawings of the calligraphers, where a free-flowing style appropriate to the subject matter is adopted. Preface by Ryutei Tanehiko (1783-1842), one of the greatest of the Edo novelists (Hokusai illustrated several of his novels), one of the early scholars of ukiyo-e, and an amateur artist of considerable ability:

To be full of art theories but not move a brush is like having a good cure but failing to mix the prescription. Making use of the ancients' theories to effect the present cure is surely the best of all medicines.

Now with painters it's much the same. Breaking with the threads of old theoretical tradition, to paint flowers as though really beautiful, and paint snow as though it were really cold—this may be called true skill. But there is only one such painter: this Master Hokusai.

Not fond of drink nor loving the tea ceremony—for fifty years now absorbed only in painting—he has consistently avoided the easy path of conventional elegance. Not just painting mountains or clouds with no distinction between them—pictures that are only pictures—he has withdrawn from the real, but in so doing created true reality. Indeed has he instituted a new school of painting.

Since that year in Bunka [i.e., Bunka II (1814), the year Volume I was published], letting his imagination run wild and following his brush, somehow or other already ten volumes have seen the light of day. But even this has not been enough for the insatiable public, and so the master, bowing to the incessant demand, again poises his brush and in this volume fills in the scenes he has neglected hitherto. Incidentally, sequels will follow, and the series will be completed before long in twenty volumes.

Ah, the wonder of his veteran mastery, which surpasses anything ever seen before! This is indeed the most fascinating of all picture books.

VOLUME XII. 1834. Grotesqueries and caricatures predominate. The reader is especially directed to the diptych consisting of XII-8-L and XII-9-R (unfortunately, not reproducible in this anthology), which shows Hokusai at his lusty, if perhaps censorable, best. This volume has always been the favorite in Europe, where its powerful style and probing content have delighted connoisseur and layman alike. Preface by Sugawara Shakuyakutei (1767-1845), Edo poet and author of several Hokusai-illustrated novels:

The *Hokusai Manga* are indeed real: like eating the actual sugar cane painted by Ku K'ai-chih [fourth-century Chinese master]! And now we have reached the peak of his



performance, with Volume Twelve—mad scenes, a hundred shapes, his practiced brush-strength increasingly vigorous.

Truly can he argue the weight of Toba Sojo's rice bales or contest the height of Hanabusa Itcho's football [i.e., rival the greatest performances of the earlier masters of painting]. Even if Kainambo [guardian spirit of painting] were to appear again, how could he achieve as much?

Spring, 1834.

VOLUME XIII. Preface dated 1849, but probably published in 1850, after Hokusai's death. This volume presents special problems in that the facts of its authorship, assembly, and publication are obscure. Fine landscapes and powerful animals predominate; also numerous studies of men at work. The style used covers the range of Hokusai's art, from the most constricted to the most modernistic. This is possibly explained by an oral tradition in Japan which insists that this volume was not organized by Hokusai but by his voracious publisher, who built the books out of whatever sketches he could pick up in the artist's studio, possibly after Hokusai's death. This would mean that the drawings were Hokusai's, but not the selection of what was to be included nor its arrangement, either on the individual pages or in the book. This problem will be discussed later. Preface by Sankin-Gaishi Shoryu, a minor nineteenth-century artist and calligrapher of Nagoya:

Herewith is printed the thirteenth volume of the *Hokusai Manga*. Ah, how rich—Master Taito's brush! Breaking free from the "pure reason" of the *Ten Bamboo Studio* and the *Mustard Seed Garden*, in each volume he has displayed his genius in portraying the flavorful aspects of the *human* world.

And each production is increasingly marvelous. Already there have been prefaces by the greats, Shokusanjin, Rokujuen, Shikitei; what more can I say! Ah, how rich—Master Taito's brush!

VOLUME XIV. About 1875, twenty-six years after Hokusai's death. This volume is composed of formalized, completed pictures rather than sketches. Landscapes and animals dominate, and any one of these polished drawings could have been used without further work as the basis for a color print. Without anticipating the discussion of technical problems relating to Volumes XIII-XV, I must point out that the drawings which make up this volume are precisely the finished type of art that would have impressed someone who was not himself an artist; whereas if Hokusai had been doing the selecting, there is good reason to think that he would have intermixed some rough sketches such as would have appealed to his artist's sense, and



such as he had always included in his earlier selections. Many of the drawings in this volume are delightful, and the present anthology, as originally planned, contained three times as many of them as it does now; but the more I reflected upon the problems of the *Manga* the more I became convinced that this volume, both in spirit and in execution, stands somewhat outside the *Manga* series as projected by Hokusai. This, then, would explain why, even though I am satisfied that the drawings are by Hokusai, and even though they are in his best style, I nevertheless find them lacking in the casual fire of the ruder, early sketches and have omitted most of them. In technical competence, of course, they are admirable. Preface by the mid-nineteenth-century literatus and master calligrapher Hyakkei-o:

Prose is the implement for effecting human understanding. Painting is the device for transmitting form. However, if the prose is unskilled, how can the understanding be effected? And if the picture is unskilled, one can hardly expect the form to be transmitted. Thus, for example, to draw a tiger, but to have it look like a dog!

All that Hokusai draws transmits the true form. Even a child of two seeing these pictures will understand what they represent. In view of this fact, were we not in the presence of a real master of the brush, how could all the contents of the universe be re-created with such reality?

Now with the printing of this little volume I've been asked for a preface, and for the amusement of children have written this simple introduction.

VOLUME XV, 1878, twenty-nine years after Hokusai's death. This volume falls markedly below Hokusai's standards. The drawings may be assumed to be his, but neither their organization nor sequence could be. The few pages of early-style crowded sketches have some of the old fire but are otherwise undistinguished, while the more formal diptychs are dull. Subject matter includes some landscapes, some games, animals, flowers, birds, and fishes, also a few historical subjects. Only one page from this volume is used in this anthology, Plate 64, to illustrate Hokusai's curious conventions regarding flowers; but page XV-10-L, which is not reproduced, is nevertheless a delightful study of rabbits. Otherwise, the style of drawing lacks distinction and it is doubtful that Hokusai, had he been alive to supervise the preparation of this book, would have approved many of the designs now included. Preface by Katano Toshiro, master of the Nagoya publishing house Eirakuya (also known as Tohekido) and son of Hokusai's original Nagoya publisher:

The *Manga* of Master Hokusai are publications of my house. The scenes painted in



these volumes include not only all kinds of landscapes, foliage, birds and animals, insects and fish, but further human figures such as farmers in the planting and harvesting of crops, and the work of all kinds of artisans—indeed, everything under the sun is included, without an omission. And these volumes are the ancestors of all such books.

My deceased father made a contract with the master to complete this series in fifteen volumes. Thus, just as soon as the master drew, so did we publish, these totaling fourteen volumes in all. And they were widely distributed throughout the land. But coming to the fifteenth volume, the illustrations were but half completed and not yet published when the master died; and at about the same time my father also passed away.

I have long regretted that the series had not been completed according to my father's hopes. And now all kinds of foreign visitors have come over to our shores, widely loving and praising the master and collecting his works. One day I saw a book newly published in Europe, and in it there were included a goodly number of Hokusai's *Manga* illustrations. From this I realized how far beyond the seas had spread the power of the master's brush.

Since only the least effort was needed to complete the series, it was most providential to discover more of the master's sketches among the scraps in the bottom of a chest. These have been added to the illustrations of the incomplete book and are now published as Volume Fifteen.

Thus is the series completed. My father's last wish has been fulfilled, and further, the master's remaining works are now complete. Thus am I relieved of my long-standing regret. My only wish now is that the world will take and love this book.

I have thus related the provenance of this volume, and made it my preface.

July, 1878, the Year of the Tiger.

There has been much speculation as to how Hokusai prepared his drawings for the *Manga*. From paragraph four of the first preface some critics have got the idea that a group of jovial drunks gathered and dashed off more than three hundred fortuitous sketches within a few days. Certainly, the haphazard aspect of the *Manga* would support this view, which is generally held today. It would next be logical to assume that Hokusai then assembled the many individual sketches and redrew them onto pages, arranging them into the tasteful patterns we enjoy today. Later, as the years passed, he went on accumulating boxes filled with random sketches, sorting them out from time to time, first into pages and then into books.

I do not believe that this was how it was done. I can accept the first part of the theory—the jovial drunks—for although Hokusai was more abstemious than many of his fellow woodblock artists, he nevertheless did take pains to write in a preface to a book of his: "If there be a moralist who has



said that at the first cup it is the man who drinks the saké, at the second it is the saké that drinks the saké, and at the third it is the saké that drinks the man, there are others less severe who declare that there is no limit to saké drinking, so long as it brings no disorder with it." Therefore I see nothing wrong in thinking that Hokusai did dash off his original sketches in bewildering prodigality, and it seems quite likely that he and his admirers dreamed up the idea for a sketchbook during some delightful brawl in Nagoya and forthwith proceeded to compose hundreds of sketches within the space of a very few days.

But I cannot accept the second part of the theory. What happened next was probably something like this: Hokusai gave his publisher, possibly Eirakuya in Nagoya, a bundle of sketches and some general ideas. Eirakuya then arranged a business deal for simultaneous publication by one or more Edo publishers, the most important being Kakumaruya (they were to drop out of the project after Volume X). One of the publishers—probably, at least in the case of the first volume, the Nagoya house—then took the sketches and arranged them roughly into some kind of page patterns and page sequences, but they were not redrawn by Hokusai. Thus the original drawings for Plate 5 probably consisted of from seventeen to nineteen different sketches of from ten to fifteen varying sizes. The actual layout of the page was probably accomplished by the woodcarver, although it is possible that the publisher assumed responsibility for this—or that Hokusai did. But I find it difficult to believe that he always did so. Nor can I believe that in most instances he ordained the sequence of the finished pages.

Much evidence supports my speculation. First, we know that in Hokusai's time woodblock publishers exerted considerable control over their artists, much more so than European publishers ever exercised over their graphic designers. There are numerous instances in which woodblock artists have attested in writing to the fact that it was their publishers who initiated a series or a publication, laying down rather specific requirements.

Second, we have at least two dozen significant instances in which publishers organized teams of artists, sometimes quite disparate in their styles, to collaborate in producing books or prints in which the finished work parades a harmonious style at which the artists could scarcely have arrived working independently or without authoritative guidance.

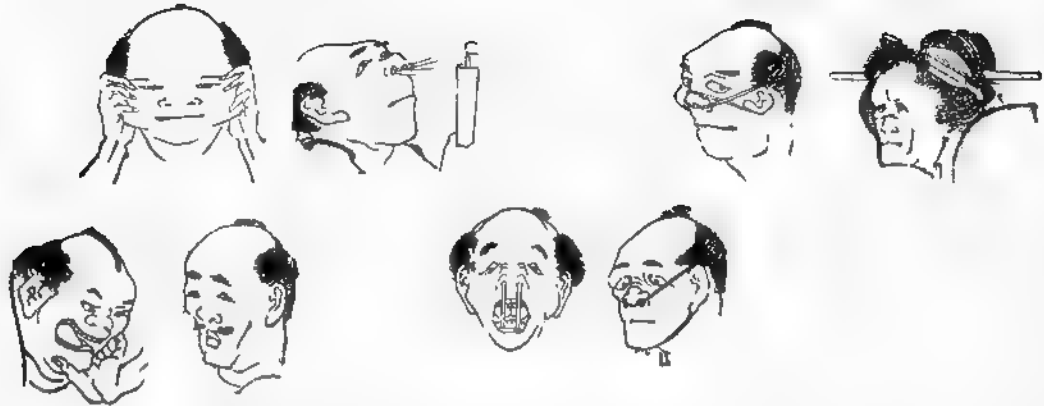
Third, if we compare all the available brush sketches that have come



down to us with the kinds of finished work that resulted when those or similar sketches were carved onto blocks, we know that the final appearance of a finished print was often due principally to the woodcarver who happened to cut the block from the original drawing. Thus the famous woodblock artist Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764) kept a skilled carver who could do a "Masanobu head," and the artist merely roughed in the heads on his pillar prints, leaving their detailed execution to the specialist. Few artists went to the trouble of actually drawing either the fall of drapery or textile patterns. That was the job of the woodcarver. And we know from extant drawings that some artists at least—and I feel sure all of them—rejected the tedium of drawing hair, leaving that to highly skilled carving specialists.

Fourth, Hokusai is supposed to have drawn not less than forty thousand individual designs, of which thousands have come down to us. The French dealer Beres and the Dutch dealer Tikotin alone have for sale today hundreds of important sketches each, plus several thousand minor items. Museums and private collectors probably have an even greater number, so that any scholar who wishes can, with a minimum of effort, consult many thousand Hokusai sketches, similar in style to those originally offered for the *Manga*. It is a striking fact that most of these drawings differ in style and feeling from those appearing in engraved form in the *Manga*, but only in such details as would be accounted for by the fact that the drawings had been translated onto woodblocks by some strong-willed woodcarver who, when he got hold of a drawing, hammered it into his personal woodcutting style.

Fifth, we fortunately have written proof that Hokusai suffered in this manner at the hands of his opinionated woodcarvers, whom he was never able to discipline into cutting onto their blocks exactly what he had provided them as copy. In an entreaty to one of his publishers Hokusai cries: "I suggest that the engraver should add no lower eyelids where I did not draw them. As to noses: these are my noses [and he draws two examples] and the noses usually engraved are the noses of [Utagawa] Toyokuni [1769-1825], which I do not like at all and which are contrary to the laws of the art of drawing. It is also the fashion to draw eyes like this [and he provides a sample with a black point in the center], but such eyes I like no more than such noses." It was not until late in life—long after the *Manga* had been



launched—that he finally was able to report to his publisher that at last an engraver had been provided who was able to cut onto wood what he, Hokusai, had submitted on paper. He begged his publisher to use no one but that engraver henceforth.

Sixth, we know specifically that he was not satisfied with the woodcarving done for the *Manga*, for when he was seventy-four and in exile from Edo, he wrote secretly to his publishers reporting: "As to your 'old un,' it is always the same, the power of his brush continues to grow, and more than ever to work industriously. When he is one hundred, he will be numbered among the great artists." Then he added what is more important to our present argument: a request that his next book be engraved by Egawa Tomekichi, pointing out: "The reason I hold absolutely that the engraving should be done by Egawa is this: even though the *Manga* and the *Poets* were well engraved, they are far from having the perfection of the *Fuji* book engraved by him. What I beg for is the sharpness of his execution, and this would be satisfaction to a poor old man who hasn't much further to go."

Seventh, we know from preface XV that the last volume of the *Manga* was put together in the manner I have suggested, and oral tradition supports the belief that Volumes XIII and XIV were too. If it be argued that since these last three volumes show the lack of Hokusai's guiding hand, he therefore must have supervised the first twelve, I would agree. There is a difference between the powerful first volumes, with which he was directly associated, and the stilted concluding ones, with which he was not, and I am sure that the difference lies in the fact that Hokusai helped supervise the former and not the latter. But what we are concerned with is not the fact of his association, but its nature, and I believe it must have been pretty much as I have indicated.

Finally, there is the evidence of the original drawings which have survived. If I had never seen these, I would have, on the one hand, rejected Volumes XIII-XV as spurious, and on the other I would have had no idea of the problems connected with getting together any given volume of the *Manga*. But having seen the drawings, it is quite obvious that any reasonably competent book-designer could build from those now available an additional two or three issues of the *Manga* which would prove to be indistinguishable from the first twelve volumes and markedly superior to the last three. If



I could be provided with a woodcarver who could approximate the *Manga* style, I would be willing to attempt the job myself, confident of success, so rich is our heritage of Hokusai drawings.

There remains one major problem regarding Volumes XIII-XV. In view of the uncertainty surrounding these volumes, should sketches from them be included in an anthology of the *Manga*? Critical opinion differs on this point, but after a review of the evidence, particularly the relationship of extant drawings to the *Manga* and the material discussed later in the text accompanying Plates 141-42, I find no valid reason for excluding these volumes from the Hokusai *oeuvre*. Their existence can be explained logically, chronologically, and artistically. Pretty surely they represent Hokusai's drawings and an extension of his concept. Consequently, nine plates have been included from Volume XIII, eight from XIV, and one from XV. It should be made clear, however, that the decision to include these plates was my responsibility alone and I would respect the judgment, though I could not agree with it, of some other anthologist who preferred to exclude these latter volumes.

The *Manga* appears so haphazard that it often gives the wrong impression of Hokusai. He was at times a hasty workman, and his biography is replete with examples of artistic excesses such as painting single pictures 2,250 square feet in size and next drawing two sparrows on a grain of rice. But he was also a careful workman, capable of diligent study, and we are beginning to find that for many of his apparently haphazard *Manga* drawings he conducted much research, made many preliminary trials, and worked with precision. See the illustrations and text on pages 257-58 to follow one instance in which Hokusai pursued an idea over at least sixteen years until he caught the appropriate expression of one character for one of his finest prints.

More striking was the discovery by C.J. Holmes, the British critic, sometime before 1909 of at least four of Hokusai's preliminary studies for Plates 55-56, the famous "Running Tiger." Holmes reproduces these studies in his essay on Hokusai. The first shows a paper ruled in squares, such as schoolboys use when making copies of subjects; each square is numbered, and across them the tiger is drawn in free strokes. The second study is in wash and shows the same tiger, refined and with lettering indicating important points in the drawing. These drawings are now in the Fitzwilliam



Museum, Cambridge, and if they do indeed constitute preliminary drawing for the *Manga*—some scholars have asked whether they might not rather be school pieces done after the *Manga* by Hokusai's pupils—we have concrete evidence of the care with which he evolved at least some of his best *Manga* sketches.

As we shall see later, one fascinating aspect of the *Manga* is the manner in which some of its sketches presage the later color prints. A few samples demonstrating this relationship conclude this anthology, but many of the earlier plates, offered under other categories, could also have been cited as sketches which were later used as the basis for outstanding color prints. These, naturally, have a special interest for us.

For example, Plate 52 is here used primarily to show Hokusai's style in drawing sea creatures, but it also happens to be identical with the central portion of a distinguished scroll-type color print showing three turtles among fragments of seaweed in a blue ocean.

This sketch and its related print raise an interesting problem: which came first, the sketch or the print? In this case the answer is clear. The sketch appeared in Volume VII of the *Manga*, so that it must have been completed by 1817, the year in which that volume was published. The color print, however, did not appear until sometime after 1830, so that it can logically be assumed to have been based upon the drawing. On the other hand, Plate 187 presents a different problem. It appeared in Volume XIII, which was not published until 1850, whereas the print to which the lower half of the plate is obviously related had already appeared prior to 1829, and there is a possibility that the drawing may have been copied from the print and inserted into the *Manga* rather than the other way around.

For if the *Manga* was popular, it was also voracious. I am suspicious of any sketch in Volumes XI through XV if its related color print cannot be dated accurately as having appeared later than the published sketch. Therefore, in the section of this anthology dealing with precursors, or forerunners, only one plate has been taken from Volumes XI-XV, Plate 187 discussed above.

In summarizing the present status of scholarship regarding this series, many points remain obscure. We do not know the working relationship between Hokusai and his pupils insofar as authorship of the earlier volumes is concerned. We cannot be sure that Hokusai had anything to do with the



preparation of Volume XIII, although we feel reasonably sure the sketches are his. We do not know that he ever earmarked any sketches for Volumes XIV and XV, although the publisher of the latter volume claims he did. Nor do we know in what form Hokusai delivered his sketches to the woodcarver, or who arranged the layout of the pages and their sequence within the book. Where a sketch resembles a color print, we cannot always be sure which came first. And in some important cases where we possess what seem to be trial proofs of sketches for the *Manga*, we cannot be sure whether Hokusai did them in preparation for the *Manga* or whether some pupil did them later as school exercises in copying from the *Manga*.

We can, however, be certain that it was the driving force of Katsushika Hokusai which permeated the *Manga*, and today these volumes can be accepted as representing the great old man who, in some form or other, supervised their preparation.

We are more sure of our ground when we discuss the public and critical reception given the *Manga*, both at the time of publication and in the ensuing years. We have seen how the general population took these books to its heart and required not only a succession of volumes but several editions of each. It is now necessary to determine who in Japanese society bought the books. Certainly it was not the upper cultured class, for they have always held in contempt both Hokusai's prints in general and his *Manga* in particular. The reasons for this are clear and still operate throughout Japanese cultural circles, where tradition-oriented upper-class Japanese are actually shocked that Western critics can take Hokusai seriously. In fact, the difference between the average Japanese art connoisseur and his European counterpart is perhaps most easily defined by reference to their contrasting views on Hokusai. Argues the Japanese: Hokusai was an unpolished peasant and his work has only rude vitality; he is devoid of the sophisticated Chinese tradition; he is uncouth and overstates his case; he is representational instead of impressionistic; and in some indefinable way he is par excellence the artist for the masses, the exhibitionistic draftsman for people who do not think, or who cannot. Hokusai also bears the brunt of two understandable psychological factors: because he has come to represent to an outstanding degree the entire woodblock school, which has always been held in low esteem in traditional Japanese intellectual circles, he must



also bear the burden of absorbing irrelevant criticism directed not at him but rather at this school; and because, as we shall see, Westerners of all descriptions have judged Hokusai to be great, there has been an unconscious determination on the part of the Japanese intellectual to resist this judgment as somehow reflecting upon his superior knowledge. Stated simply, if I were a Japanese with the same intensity of love for art that I have as a Westerner, I could not possibly like Hokusai. My cultural upbringing would have prevented my giving his work an impartial judgment.

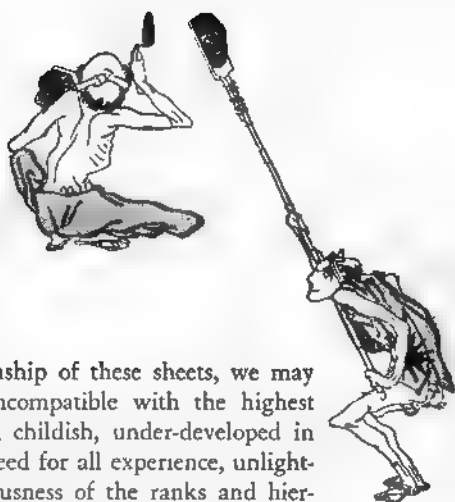
This attitude has been well expressed by Japan's most sensitive critic of woodblock art, and in reading what Sei-ichiro Takahashi says, we must remember that he speaks as a patrician who has grudgingly surrendered an inherited prejudice against the woodblock school. In other words, the man about to comment upon Hokusai is representative of a still-small group of Japanese art critics who have begun to accept artists like Hokusai:

To be honest, among the great woodblock artists I admire Hokusai the least. In him, even in his caricatures or cartoons, not a shadow of lightness or the unconventional is found; not to speak of the peaceful flavor of Great Edo, even the characteristic pleasant tones of things Japanese cannot be perceived in his pictures. They impress us with a feeling particularly stiff and heavy. Adopting some Western technique and tainted with the conventionalized weakness of Chinese painting, he certainly did much toward degrading woodblock art, an art of flower-loving Japan, into something Westernized or Chinese-fashioned. This very rustic ponderousness without a touch of smartness or refinement seems to appeal to Western people. The popularity enjoyed by Hokusai among Westerners is really surprising. Some years ago, I displayed the "Glorious Wind and Clear Weather" at an exhibition; one of the promoters thereof complained to me how very often he was requested by members of the then visiting tourist party to sell it and had to repeat the answer, "This is not for sale."*

Arthur Davison Ficke, the American writer on Japanese woodblocks who comes closest to possessing a classical Japanese taste, found Hokusai brash and marked by an uncontrolled vitality:

The "Mangwa"... is praised sometimes as his greatest work. In it we shall find not only his most striking tours-de force as a draughtsman but also the key to his weakness. All existence thrilled him... and each object on which he turned his eyes stirred him with the desire to record it in his pages. Day after day he worked like a madman, throwing off his sketches of man, beast and phantom, of rock, river and sea, in endless profusion and with inexhaustible ingenuity. And though we grant our admiration

* Takahashi, Sei-ichiro: *The Evolution of Ukiyoe. The Artistic, Economic and Social Significance of Japanese Wood-block Prints*. Translated by Ryozo Matsumoto. Yokohama: H. Yamagata, 1955.



to the enthusiasm, sharp vision, and clever draughtsmanship of these sheets, we may still find in this indiscriminating passion a quality incompatible with the highest reaches of artistic greatness. There is something vulgar, childish, under-developed in the general mental attitude revealed; it seems a coarse greed for all experience, unlighted by the power to judge and reject, or by any consciousness of the ranks and hierarchies of beauty. It is a vast and dull enthusiasm; a celebration of the will to live over the will to perfect; a triumph of meaningless sensation over the just judgments of the discriminating mind. All shapes seem equally interesting and beautiful to it—all smells equally sweet.

I can never look through the "*Mangwa*" without a sense of distressing chaos and a longing for the purer beauties which more finely organized artists have evoked from the heterogeneous welter of the seen world. But just this welter is at this time Hokusai's theme. "A debauch of sketches," Fenollosa calls it.

"Hokusai is incomparable," writes the commentator who furnished the introduction to one of his books. "While all his predecessors were more or less slaves to classical tradition and inherited rules, he alone emancipated his brush from all such fetters and drew according to the dictates of his heart." True: and this was his curse. No man has ever lived with heart profound and subtle enough for such emancipation. Nor have the supreme artists ever attempted it. In Hokusai's case this upstart-abandoning of all tradition was an error from which he was able later to retrieve himself; but so great was the impression produced by his vulgarities on the mob that even to this day popular Japanese art has remained under the cloud of it.*

Recently J. Hillier, a British critic who applauds Hokusai in general, had this to say about the *Manga*:

Being a collection of sketches, there is no continuity from page to page and even a single page may contain figures from well-known legends mingled higgledy piggledy with quite inconsequential "doodles" of birds and fishes. Everything the master drew was considered worthy of perpetuation, and the uncritical homage of pupils, to whom to a certain extent the compilation of these volumes is due, led to the inclusion of much that we can only consider trifles.

But scattered throughout the volumes there are many splendid things and an impressive anthology could be formed from them. . . . Nobody could complain that Hokusai makes his drawing lessons dull. Yet one is unwise to look at more than a small fraction of this *magnum opus* at a time. The lack of plan, of homogeneity, in these fifteen volumes, the fragmentary nature of the drawings, succeeds in sating without satisfying. . . . The many eulogies penned by earlier enthusiasts may have been prompted by this power of Hokusai's to astonish by his inexhaustible variety and virtuosity, but it is difficult to understand how Binyon and Sexton, usually so measured in their judgments, could describe the *Mangwa* as Hokusai's "masterpiece." It has something of the power of those other prodigies that so astounded his contemporaries, the Gargantuan Daruma and the miniatures painted on ears of rice, but looked at purely

* Ficke, Arthur Davison: *Chats on Japanese Prints*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1915. To be reprinted shortly by Charles E. Tuttle Co.



from the artistic standpoint, it yields to several books and to most of the later broad-sheets.*

Hillier's measured judgment is widely accepted today and it is likely that future critics in the West will forego the enthusiasms of the past and will point out that there are other Hokusai drawing books markedly superior to the *Manga*. To that extent, the initial prejudices of the Japanese intellectual against this series will have been adopted by the rest of the world.

Yet there have been many critics, with credentials equal to those cited, who have found in the *Manga* an authentic, vital art experience. Edmond de Goncourt and Laurence Binyon are among the most perceptive judges of Japanese prints so far produced in the West, and their view of the *Manga* has been expressed by C. J. Holmes, who says bluntly: "It [the *Manga*] contains so much of the artist's best work." Later he justifies this conclusion:

It is enough to say here that within the limits of their schemes of black, grey, and pale pink, the good things of the *Mangwa* were never surpassed, even by Hokusai himself, though the collection of his compositions published in the year of his death in three volumes, under the title of *Hokusai Gwafu*, maintains a higher average of excellence. ... And so the series [the *Manga*] goes on, with masterpiece after masterpiece.

I think that we can now safely draw this conclusion: when the *Manga* was originally published, of a given hundred copies sold in the streets, at least ninety-eight were purchased by citizens of the middle and lower classes and only two, at most, by what we might call the upper-class educated citizenry. The reaction of the contemporary intellectual is not clear, for it is obvious that some of the prefaces were written by men of considerable intellectual pretensions; but by and large the intellectual Japanese did not purchase the *Manga*. The triumph of the series has therefore been the victory of the common citizen, who saw in Hokusai a rugged, peasant-type artist who created an art that he, the commoner, could comprehend and enjoy.

To understand how great the impact of the *Manga* was upon the middle and lower classes, one must recall that in Japan in the age of Hokusai the Tokugawa dictatorship was making every effort to preserve the social *status quo*, along with its general low level of education, and that as a result books containing any new and unapproved ideas in the fields of history, geography, political science, and the like were severely frowned upon, while those on foreign subjects were absolutely interdicted. During a period of well over

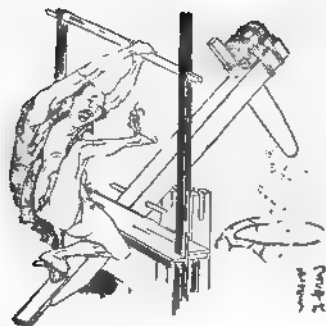
* Hillier, J.: *Hokusai*. London: Phaidon Press, 1955.



two hundred years even the most interested commoner had had little chance of studying his nation's past in books, finding readily available only the old tried and tested formulas and picture books extolling imaginary heroic actions. So Hokusai's *Manga*, and other books like it, filled a real void. Another reason why contemporary intellectuals must have scorned the *Manga* was that they did have access to clandestine manuscript histories, economic treatises, and scientific summaries, many compiled by surreptitious students who hung around the Dutch entrepôt at Nagasaki. These secret reports from the outside world could not, of course, be printed in book form, but they did circulate and they did constitute another sharp demarcation between the intellectuals on the one hand and the kind of people who would read the *Manga* on the other. To appreciate the *Manga*, therefore, one should project himself into the spirit of the average Edokko in 1814. Then one realizes that Hokusai's crowded pages constituted this man's history book, his newspaper, his scientific summary, and his treatise on moral principles. That is a major reason why the *Manga* enjoyed such a vigorous life.

Finally, it is necessary to keep in mind the place of the *Manga* in relation to Hokusai's other series of drawing books, and since he issued about 210 different titles comprising a total of about 500 individual volumes, it would obviously be impossible here even to catalogue them. Many are fugitive little novels with a score of pages each, treasured today only because of their Hokusai drawings. Their authors were usually unknowns, but occasionally the leading *littérateurs* of the day. Hokusai himself composed some of the texts he illustrated.

There are also some erotic books, several of high artistic value but most of little merit. More important are the long novels by important authors; here flashing text and brilliant illustration compete for attention, Hokusai's drawings forming an indigenous part of the novels. Chief among these were the works of Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), with whom Hokusai performed a stormy collaboration ending in mutual recriminations. The partnership started in 1794 and covered at least thirteen different Bakin novels, the break coming in 1811, when Hokusai's illustrations for the *Illustrated New Edition* of "*Suikoden*" were judged to be more interesting than Bakin's text for this famous old Chinese classic, which covered ninety volumes. In the



ensuing recriminations between author and artist, Bakin was fired by his publishers, long before the ninety volumes were completed; Hokusai was kept on as illustrator.

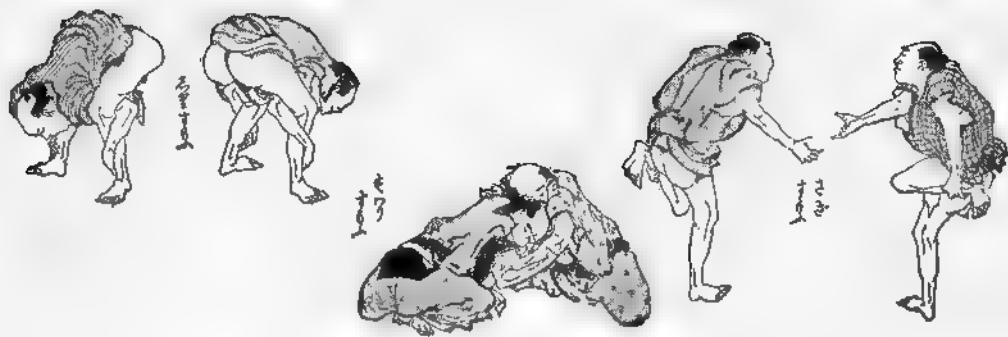
But when one refers to Hokusai's other books which excelled the *Manga*, one means principally a group of series, any one of which could legitimately be termed superior to the *Manga* in draftsmanship or artistic content. I shall arbitrarily compress these rivals into four categories:

I. The early series dealing with Edo, principally: *Ehon Azuma Asobi* (Amusements of the Eastern Capital), 1799; *Ehon Sumida-gawa Ryogan Ichuran* (Panoramic Views along Both Banks of the Sumida River), about 1804-5; and the unpublished drawings intended for a late book to have been entitled *Toto Chimei* (Life in the Eastern Capital), a set of distinguished and vital panoramas of street life.

II. The middle series dealing with legendary characters from Chinese and Japanese history: *Shimpen Suiko Gaden* (Illustrated New Edition of *Suikoden*), 1807-28; *Ehon Sakigaki* (Picture Book of Warriors), 1836; *Ehon Musashi Abumi* (The Stirrups of Musashi), 1836; and *Ehon Wakan no Homare* (The Glories of China and Japan), 1837. My later comments on Hokusai's historical drawings will show that I find this group of books rather boring, but other critics have a high regard for them because of their bold drawing and fine storytelling quality.

III. The continuous but spasmodic series called the *Gafu* (Sketches), consisting principally of: *Hokusai Shashin Gafu* (Drawings from Life by Hokusai), about 1814; *Hokusai Dochu Zue* (Map of a Journey), about 1818; *Hokusai Gashiki* (Various Designs by Hokusai), 1819; and *Hokusai Soga* (Designs of Hokusai), 1820. The artistic excellence of these books is high, and since the drawings provide finished pictures of powerful impact, they have always been popular. In 1849 either Hokusai or his publishers issued an anthology of the best plates from these series under the title *Hokusai Gafu*, and it was this book which reached Europe with stunning effect. Japanese woodblock art contains few prints so free in execution as that of the five country people in big hats bending into the wind; or so pathetic as the eleven old blind men trying to ford a stream; or so poetic as the eight travelers plodding beneath a Fuji obscured by clouds and a shower of vertical rain. These are great prints indeed.

IV. And finally there are the three volumes that stand apart, constituting



a peculiar treasure: *Fugaku Hyakkei* (One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji), 1834-35. When studied in conjunction with the colored prints of the *Thirty-six Views of Fuji*, these sketches illuminate Hokusai's preoccupation with the mountain. It is difficult for one who does not know this book to realize how wonderful it is. Hillier has said of it: "In some ways, this series . . . by its exemplification of what can be achieved by ingenuity in choice of viewpoint, inventive composition, marriage of central theme with minor motives, has had more effect upon western art than any other of the artist's works. . . . How many artists, and artists to be, brought up in the Victorian tradition of book illustration, must have been stirred to their depths as they turned page after page of these incomparable designs, marvelling at the originality, the fecundity, the virtuosity, the revelation of immense vistas newly opened to them."¹⁰

The anomaly of the *Manga* should now be apparent. Any one of the other major series provides better art, more polished presentation, and freer drawing. Critics unanimously agree that either the *Gafu* or the *Fuji* books excel so obviously that comparisons are irrelevant. Even Japanese connoisseurs, who cannot abide the *Manga*, do sometimes grudgingly condescend to praise the other drawings. A recent Czech critic, Joe Hloucha, has complained: "It is difficult to explain why Europe so admires the *Manga* volumes, as Hokusai created other works far more beautiful and of greater aesthetic value." French critics are beginning to question why it was that their impressionists were so joyously astounded by the *Manga*, since its hard lines, tight drawing, and old-fashioned realism constituted almost a caricature of what the impressionists were fighting against in Europe. Ficke calls the work undisciplined, and it is. Hloucha terms it "a hodge-podge of everything . . . sometimes naive, at other times primitive," and he is also correct. Yet the world loves it.

* The *Hundred Views* is of additional interest in that it throws light on the arguments advanced on pages 35-36 and 257-58 to the effect that we cannot be sure that any given sketch from *Manga* Volumes XI-XV appeared before the color print with which it is associated, and that it could well have been drawn after the publication of the print in an effort to provide additional copy for the *Manga*. This concept of post-creation is repugnant to some critics, but even a casual inspection of the *Hundred Views*, published in 1834-35, will show that Hokusai here borrowed liberally from his earlier color prints of Fuji, published between 1823 and 1829. The *Hundred Views* also provides two more fine studies for the rush gatherer, whose artistic history is summarized on page 258. In this case it seems likely that Hokusai copied from a color print published in 1831 the two casual drawings which appear in the *Hundred Views*.



I have long been perplexed as to why it was the *Manga* that caught popular fancy—and holds it still—since in so many respects the other series were superior; and I have concluded that it is the *Manga's* simple honesty, its peasant force, its lack of pretension that have kept it popular with artist and layman alike. In fact, it is precisely the weaknesses that any critic can point to which account for its vitality. In the perverse manner that oftentimes makes the village drunkard and not the vicar the most loved man in the countryside, just so does the *Manga* hold our affection.

In 1951 the Stedelyk Museum in Amsterdam held an exhibition in which drawings of Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and Hokusai were displayed side by side, and although there is some suspicion that the show may have been masterminded by a dealer with surplus stock of Hokusai drawings, there was general critical agreement that Hokusai did not suffer in this comparison. Years before, Holmes had foreseen this development and had written: "The drawings, with all their spirit, have the cosmopolitan suavity of the most perfect naturalism—many of the figures, indeed, are quite worthy of Rembrandt."

More recently, Elise Grilli, art critic for the *Japan Times*, has said of Hokusai's drawing books in general: "The vivacity of this pageant recalls a related sense of human turmoil in the sketches and etchings of Hokusai's contemporary, Goya. But Hokusai is without the bitterness that choked the Spaniard. The Japanese *comédie humaine* has a strain of satire and ridicule, but no more than actually resides in the human species and is there for all to see who have the piercing vision of a Hokusai."*

I am confident that in years to come the best Hokusai drawings will be generally recognized as the equal of those of Rembrandt, Goya, and Van Gogh. At that time the treasure house of sketches provided in the *Manga* will be seen for what it is: a vital, disorganized foretaste of the greatness that resided in the Old Man Mad about Drawing.

* Grilli, Elise: *Katsushika Hokusai*. Library of Japanese Art, Vol. I. Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1955.

PEOPLE



ONE IS tempted to say—and those not entirely familiar with Hokusai's work have said it—that the *Manga* is a record of the people of Japan. As this anthology will demonstrate, that is far from the case. Many of the greatest pages of the *Manga* involve no human beings, just as some of Hokusai's supreme prints are concerned solely with nature, specifically the austere views of Fuji and the superb flower prints.

Nevertheless, it is true that on fleeting inspection the major impression left by the *Manga* is one of teeming multitudes of people engaged in the minutiae of daily living; and if one had to select only a single page from this cluttered compendium to represent it to the general public, he would indeed be forced by wisdom to choose a typical page of the squirming, struggling, average human beings whom Hokusai delighted to draw. Certainly, to ignore such pages would be to miss the central message of the *Manga* and its creator.

The print that begins this section is the very essence of Hokusai—an old man with few belongings looking confidently toward some future. There is reason to believe that Hokusai saw himself this way, for in his work we have many evocations of this particular mood, and his well-known self-portrait, reproduced on our title page, shows such a man. The face, as here, is lined with age; the body is halt; the staff is necessary for movement; but the countenance is radiant. We are permitted, I think, to carry in our minds this summary of the way Hokusai saw the individual man, and it is certainly the way in which we who love the cantankerous old Japanese draftsman see him in our memory.

But how did Hokusai see, not himself, but his fellow men? His social contempt for them has already been recited. He was neither the convivial roisterer that Ichiryusai Hiroshige (1797 1858) became, nor the mournful drunkard into which Ichiyusai Kuniyoshi (1797 1861) degenerated. He was a man who mainly stayed apart, if not aloof, from the mob, not because of any pronounced antisocial compulsion, for we know that he enjoyed himself enormously on trips, but because he was so consumingly dedicated to his work that he could allow no interruptions.

He was contemptuous alike of his own comfort, of the opinion of his



fellows—so long as that opinion did not involve art matters—and of his place in society. His ridiculous and filthy mode of life made him the traditional village recluse; while his insulting indifference to society's judgments made him a misanthrope. Looking solely at Hokusai's social behavior, one would be unprepared for the cyclone of loving sketches in which he presents his view of human behavior.

Hokusai was the misanthrope who loved men, the agnostic who loved God, the recluse who reveled in his memories of society, the ascetic who loved debauchery, and the dirty old man who savored the cleanliness of nature. It is therefore in his crowded pages of people that we come closest to apprehending the soul of this strange, puissant man.

The pages of this first section present man at his most robust, in his most lovable and cantankerous moods. Hokusai does not, in a timeless Shakespearean sense, give us all men; he provides us with a glimpse of what men were like in Edo and its environs in the early years of the nineteenth century: how prostitutes approached customers, how women bathed, how farmers sweated, and how workmen brawled in public, with special emphasis on the games and sports engaged in by the people of that day.

In his drawings of people Hokusai exhibited a major characteristic of his work: his propensity for drawing each single item of a total sketch as if it existed not in relationship to all other component items, but alone. Study even the most cluttered page that follows, and you will find each separate individual existing by himself, in suspension as it were from contact with other people or with surrounding things. Interrelationships between people are rarely shown, and one may describe this basic Hokusai weakness as particularism: the seeing of individual items like people or rocks or trees each in an isolated category by itself.

This particularism, which also marked Hokusai's teacher Shunsho, was by no means a characteristic of all Japanese woodblock art, for the great progenitor Hishikawa Moronobu (1618? 94) was noted for a completely opposite manner. He was unable to draw people on his prints without interrelating them in psychological involvements, and many students of Moronobu have commented on the subtle way in which he lures the viewer



into the complex relationships expressed in his prints. What is that samurai saying to the geisha? Why does the girl look back? Where have these servants been? The same is true of the best work of Torii Kiyonaga (1752-1815) and Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806), but rarely of Hokusai's.

His people stand alone. There is no interplay of human values, no challenge of psychology, no invitation to involvement. His is an art of particularism, and as we shall see later, he viewed his physical world in the same way. Rocks and trees rarely interfuse the way they do in the canvases of Claude Monet; like the men of Hokusai's world, these landscape elements stand apart, each to itself.

Does the particularity of Hokusai's vision diminish—or perhaps even destroy—the universality of his art? Many have thought so, and I have often suspected that Hokusai's extraordinary energy in recording the look of his people prevented him from describing their inner purposes. Nor do I believe that I would argue strenuously if one were to claim that Hokusai stops short of the profound insights exhibited by Rembrandt in the work of his later years.

On the other hand, the sheer vitality of the man provides us with an unmatched record of human occupation and activity, which, even if it does not cut deeply, does nevertheless perpetuate one of the vivid periods of Asian history: the Edo period at its height. To appreciate the treasure-trove the world possesses in the *Manga* and its related works, we have only to ask ourselves: "What would we give to have a similar pictorial record of life in Periclean Athens, Augustan Rome, or Elizabethan England?" Then the accidental magnitude of Hokusai's work becomes apparent.

A final comment is necessary. Hokusai's famous pages of teeming figures developed out of the fact that Japan is crowded, and if they serve to remind us of this, they will have brought us closer to an understanding of Japan.

Plate 4. This revealing character-study of an old man—probably very much like the man Hokusai saw himself becoming—is captioned “Saisoro,” literally, “Mulberry-picking old man.” This is the name of a dramatic piece from the Gagaku repertoire of dances which have been performed at the imperial court since the 9th century. This particular dance, believed to have come from

either China or Korea, is performed by a single dancer, who wears a white costume and an old man’s mask and who carries a stick. It portrays the staggering walk of great decrepitude. And yet, as Hokusai here suggests, great age in the Orient is a venerable estate, with nothing at all of the inherently comic or pitiful about it

桑
摘
老

サイソウラウ



Plate 5. The first figure we see in our first typical Hokusai page is a prostitute enticing a customer, upper left. To her right, a vendor hawks baked sweet potatoes. Mid-left is the perennial roasted-eel seller, who also appears in Plate 15. In the middle, a street fortune-teller reads palms, while next to him a vendor attracts customers with a spinning top. Below him a man sells odds and

ends, and below him another dispenses herbs. The bottom of the page is lined with workmen taking a five-minute rest for a smoke, while above them one man sells scrolls, probably with treasure ships painted on them for good luck, and another sells paper birds that flutter in the air as toys for children.



Plate 6. This page shows citizens of higher rank, mixed in with commoners. Tap left, court ladies dance with a fan, kneel, and play the koto, while a court gentleman rests on a mat. To the right of the koto player are a Buddhist priest a boy attendant, and an old woman. Below, with a long train, is a Shinto priest, with attendants. The man, left, with a fan is a Noh dancer and

wears the *oking* mask of an old man. The two samurai who seem to be standing on their divided skirts are doing just that, these being uniforms required at court during Hokusai's time. It was said the cumbersome clothes cut down the likelihood of brawling. Lower left, a townsman bows to a samurai who wears the customary two swords, had the commoner not bowed, the

samurai could have cut him down. The two men before the game board are playing go. Other assorted figures include the courtesan (center left) separated by two dozing figures from a formally attired samurai and his kneeling, bare-buttocked attendant; a mother and child playing piggy-back; and, lower right, a group of four citizens at their ease.



Plate 7. The upper portion of the page shows four typical figures from a street scene—including a courtesan lighting her way with a lantern and a noodle peddler, his two cases balanced on a shoulder pole, with a sign reading "2 8 Noodles" (probably so called because noodles then sold for 16 mon a dish, i.e., sixteen thousandths of one yen).

The lower scene is one that

delighted woodblock artists. It depicts a public bath with the bored male attendant reading a spicy novel, oblivious to his nude women customers. The child at the bottom has accompanied his mother to the bath while the woman lower right is wearing a white obi around her waist in accordance with an old superstition that its wearing on the Day of the Dog in the fifth month of preg-

nancy assures an easy delivery. This same custom appears again in Plate 27. Bathhouses much like this one abound in Japan today. Tokyo alone has 2,397, and their important role in everyday life is seen in the recent bitter citywide quarrel between bathhouse owners and housewives' associations over plans to increase the price of a bath from approximately 4.2 to 4.7 cents



Plate 8. Top left, a workman makes miso paste from soybeans. It will be used later for making delicious soup, but in its present form it smells rank, and the watcher holds his nose. Below, a man makes horns to frighten a child, while to their right a wife bowls out her drunken and confused husband. The samisen player is a beggar, who uses a mask to hide his identity, while the fine group

of figures lower right represents pilgrims to some shrine. The juggler uses high wooden clogs, as contrasted to those of middle height seen in Plate 22. The running figure lower left is a yakko, a lowborn servant of a samurai. He appears constantly in Japanese art, as in Plates 33 and 36. His badges of office are often his tucked-up skirts and feather-topped spear.



Plate 9. Beside a pit-like hearth which opens on a large room of a well-to-do household, family and visitors join to celebrate the New Year with freshly made *mochi*. At the top are the millstones for dehusking and polishing the rice, the huge cauldron with a heavy wooden lid in which it is steamed, the mortar and pestles used for pounding the steamed rice into the pastelike

mochi, and the rice itself in two straw baskets. The woman in the center is carrying a large slab of raw *mochi* toward the hearth, where one woman bakes it in small pieces and another puts it into bowls of fish broth to make the New Year's dish called *zoni*.

The men sit in the foreground eating this Japanese equivalent of fruitcake or plum pudding, smoking, and generally enjoy

ing themselves. In their center are the implements provided for smoking the long, slender pipes: a tall cylinder for tapping out ashes and a shorter one for holding live charcoal on a bed of ashes, from which the pipes are lit, both on a tray made of a wooden buri. These implements also appear in Plate 143. The pipes themselves hold only a few grains of tobacco.



Plate 10. The culture of rice is so important in Japan that many woodblock artists depicted it in their books. At the top, four men dam up a water-course with earth-filled bags of straw to throw water onto the rice fields. The women are preparing seed, while, below them, two men are apparently fertilizing a rice bed which is protected by a scarecrow in the form of a straw man with

bow and arrow. Below, in fine drawing, a barelegged workman leads a horse which drags a plough through the flooded field. Hokusai's drawings of rice culture are always vigorous and filled with loving detail.



Plate 11. Here Hokusai presents another typical *Manga* page. Out of his sheer love for drawing he provides nine portraits of men hefting bales of rice, each of which weighs 131 pounds. It is in figures like this, thrown off with great prodigality, that this entire series abounds. The two men engaged in filling a bale use the standard-size measure which is still required in handling rice.

The aprons, as well as the tucked-up skirts and loincloths, are likewise still much in evidence in present-day Japan.

This and the facing plate were side by side in the original *Manga* also but did not constitute a continuous diptych like that of Plates 1-2. Analysis of the *Manga* plate numbers, given in small type in the lower margins and explained on page 15, will indicate such relationships.



Plate 12. The three men harvesting rice raise a question. Clearly, they are swinging their sickles away from their bodies; yet in Japan the opposite method is ordinarily if not invariably used. Did Hokusai fail to observe accurately?

The frame on the carrier's back, upper right, is also widely used in Korea and will be instantly recognized by veterans of the Korean War as the ubiq-

uitous A-frame. Hokusai's drawing of the threshing machine operated by the woman is excellent and accurate, while his figures of men winnowing and women flailing the rice are filled with his customary vigor

This sketch also provides our first glimpse of Hokusai's drawing of trees and grasses. In this instance, however, the drawing of each is undistinguished, the strokes being

hard and unpoetic. Of course, as in all such cases, it is impossible here to know whether the blame is Hokusai's or the carver's.



Plate 13. A fine, cluttered page of women in various poses, showing Hokusai's treatment of drapery, in which he uses a hard, pre-Renaissance type of line. The old woman in white is probably a nun, while the woman chanting to the samisen may be a *nagauta* singer. Some of the most tender woodblock prints show women tending their children, and here Hokusai provides

three sketches that could have been used for such prints. Lower right, a woman pushes up her kimono sleeve in a distinctive Japanese gesture, repeated in Plate 17 and by many other woodblock artists. Near the upper-right margin, a handsomely drawn woman with back three-quarters to the viewer shows a pose which Hokusai repeated with invariable success; the costume re-

veals her to be a *miko*, a young unmarried girl in shrine service. Regarding the bare-breasted women, even today in Japan such dishabille, particularly on a hot day in the country, is a matter of comfort, not of immodesty.



Plate 14. Warehouses line the bank of a river, constructed of nonflammable material to withstand the destructive fires that so frequently ravaged Edo. Fishing along riverbanks is by no means so common in Japan as in France, but men and women often find enjoyment in this placid occupation. The rousing street brawl involving half-naked workmen often tempted Hokusai into fine

drawing. Many Westerners have commented on the striking similarity between Hokusai's bald-headed (or, more correctly, shaven-pated) workmen and the standard Western portrayals of Irishmen. In Hiroshige the likeness is sometimes uncanny, especially when the men are smoking pipes.



土俗図一巻

六

Plate 15. Among the most famous sketches in the *Manga* are the series on the fat men and the thin men. For our first sample from this delightful series I have chosen one which reflects Hokusai's joy in drawing robust women as well. Observe the wooden pillow on which one of the women sleeps; it has a convenient drawer in the base, and its sleeping surface is "softened"

by a pad filled with either rice husks or beans. The ubiquitous roasted-eel man is at work, lower left, fanning the glowing charcoal, and beside him is a man who keeps a tobacco pouch and pipe holder on the floor next to him; the Japanese pipe, which the man is smoking, provides at best only three or four puffs per filling, but its manipulation during countless refillings is said to be a great

nerve-steadier. The animal toward the right margin is probably a cat, of the short-tailed Japanese variety, but given Hokusai's known ineptness in drawing dogs, one cannot be certain of his intentions here.



Plate 16. The second page of fat-people sketches offers seven sumo dandies in jovial poses, drawn with great humor, in contrast with their more seriously presented colleagues of Plate 28. The wrestler sitting on the ground at the left is holding a fan on which are painted characters meaning "Victory." The drawing of these figures is not anatomically accurate, as will be ex-

plained later, but they do constitute symbols of fatness which have always been enjoyed by the public. The figures are so well disposed upon the page as to lead one to think that Hokusai himself may have arranged them, but more likely either the publisher or the woodcarver did so.



Plate 17. The plates presenting the thin people are not so inherently interesting as those showing their fatter cousins, but the story content is perhaps more so. At the bottom of this example, three cooks prepare food much as it is prepared in Tokyo restaurants today. The middle row presents three musicians playing respectively the *kokyū* (played by a blind man), the

shakuhachi, and the *samisen*. The first is a four-stringed Edo fiddle—three strings preferred in other areas—and appeared on the scene relatively late, apparently as an adaptation of the *samisen*. The vertical flute is no longer so popular but is capable of some of the most hauntingly sad tones to be heard from any musical instrument in the world. The *samisen*, imported from Okina-

wa in 1560, remains the foremost Japanese musical instrument, one of great charm when played either in the theater or geisha-house.



Plate 18. These eight thin people include a blind man, top left; a woman, top center, whose shaved eyebrows indicate that she is married; and an extremely thin samurai who sits beside his sword. The men at the bottom are playing shogi, a Japanese variety of chess. The drawing and pose of the figure lower left is almost a trademark of Hokusai's, the upturned face appearing

elsewhere in many forms.

These two pages appeared facing each other in the original *Manga* and have always been among the most frequently reproduced, since they are held to be typical of both Hokusai and this series of books. They have been excessively praised in Europe



Plate 19. These two pages showing the features of blind people have been widely reproduced and often praised for their variety. They faced each other in the original *Manga*. The caption on this page reads "Amaurosis." The man in the second horizontal row carries his fan in a popular Japanese position, tucked in the back of his collar; while another, in the bottom row,

hangs his Buddhist rosary on his ear. Note that in Hokusai's day a blind man customarily shaved his head; this custom still prevails to some extent.



Plate 20. The caption to this page reads "The Blind." Observe here and opposite that the formal Chinese characters, which could be understood then only by the well-educated class, including few commoners and practically no women, are spelled out at the side of each character in the cursive *hiragana* syllabary, which almost everyone could decipher. The blind seem

to have fascinated Hokusai, for they frequently occur in his drawings. They are common in Japan and by tradition are the nation's masseurs; many also become musicians.



Plate 21. This page of Buddhist priests illustrates Hokusai's gentle irony where formalized religion was concerned. He delighted in caricatures like the middle row of monks bowling their routine prayers. Upper left, an artisan-priest inscribes a sacred stupa, while two priests bow before the venerable patriarch who sits with the horsehair wand, seen also in Plate 117, that

drives away temptation and evil spirits. The bottom procession includes two monks holding in cloth-covered hands the famous Buddhist begging bowls, and a young monk carrying on his back a box containing an image of the goddess Kannon; a variation of this latter subject occurs again in Plate 183.



Plate 22. We are about to leave the pages of little people, and no farewell could be finer than this drawing of horsemen and samurai in the rain. It is one of the masterpieces of the *Manga*, the first truly fine print in Volume I of the series, and one of my three or four favorites. I find the drawing simple and effective, the disposition of weight cleverly suggested, and the positioning

of the figures impeccable. Of topical interest are the bundles of stones used to weigh down the corners of the horse's blanket, and the high, thin rain clogs, some with detachable rainproof toe-guards. Most important, however, is the beauty of the page.



Plates 23-24. We now come upon our first veritable double-page spread or diptych, in which two halves of two different wood blocks combine to form one intensely satisfying drawing. The caption reads "Crossing Lake Suwa of Shinshu over the ice." The print is magnificent, showing a band of travelers in the foreground, next the frozen lake, then medieval Takashima Castle,

and finally superb Fuji rising through the frosty air. This is our first glimpse of a true Hokusai landscape, and a most dazzling introduction it is. It is placed here because it demonstrates with what special charm Hokusai uses people to accentuate his landscapes, at the same time subduing the landscape so that it serves as a backdrop to illuminate the people. This is a most happy

wedding of purposes, one which he utilized again and again. In a sense this sketch is also a study in perspective in the Western manner, and it is interesting to observe how confusion between Chinese and Western styles produces a frozen lake which is many hundreds of yards higher where the people stand than in the distant background, although actually it had to be

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十



level throughout. Finally, this sketch is of special interest because it appeared in 1814, while one of Hokusai's noblest color prints, showing the same subject in narrow, vertical form, appeared in 1830. (See Plate 26 in *Hokusai*, Vol. 1 of *Library of Japanese Art*, Tuttle, 1955.) This later version shows men and horses traversing the ice to Takoshima Castle, with a much mightier Fuji dominating

the distance; the perspective, indicated by varying shades of blue for ice, is much superior.

信列
防湖
永渡



Plates 25-26. This well-known diptych introduces fewer human figures than the preceding, and in larger size. The vigor of the drawing and the fine observation of wind, so effectively indicated by the flying leaves and the broad bands of gray wash, have been much appreciated by artists. The sketch has style and is one of the finest in the *Manga*. The solitary character,

top left, looking much like one of the leaves, reads "Wind." The two left figures are Buddhist monks; one has lost control of his accordion-folded breviary, its long swirls lending character to the design, and the other struggles with his hat, turned inside out by the force of the wind. The boy, lower right, is probably delivering an important letter to some dignitary, for it was customary to

carry these in black-lacquered boxes covered with an expensive cloth and held on a wooden carrier, so that servants' hands would not smear the polished surface of the box.

七
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Plate 27. This scene, captioned simply "Bathhouse," again gives us a picture of the intimacy with which Japanese mothers tend their children. Psychologists have been perplexed by the subtle manner in which Japanese raise their young without ever shouting at them or striking them, yet with such complete moral force as to produce the world's most loyal and parent-

serving youth. The woman washing herself wears the pregnancy belt of Plate 7 while the shaven-headed nun, with straight razor and whetstone, goes on to shave her face as well, a common practice in Japan among women even today, performed in the neighborhood barbershop as often as in the beauty parlor. For some strange reason, the woman with the child still wears

her *tabi*, the split-toed socks worn with Japanese footgear. Hokusai's drawing of the nude is in the tradition of Toyonobu and of Torii Kiyomitsu (1735-85).



風呂屋

Plate 28. These sketches, in contrast with those of Plate 16, present Hokusai's serious examination into the recondite world of the sumo wrestlers, great hulking men who often weigh more than 400 pounds, but who are nevertheless unusually agile and adept.

Top-center caption: "Backstage, tying a wrestler's sash." Top right: "How to tie a wrestler's sash." Bottom right

"Defensive posture." Bottom center: "Stamping the feet."

This latter was, and still remains, one of the fascinating rituals of sumo, which has become extremely popular on television. It is said that the old-time wrestler used to stamp the earth of the ring to indicate that, given the chance, he could kick the life out of his opponent.

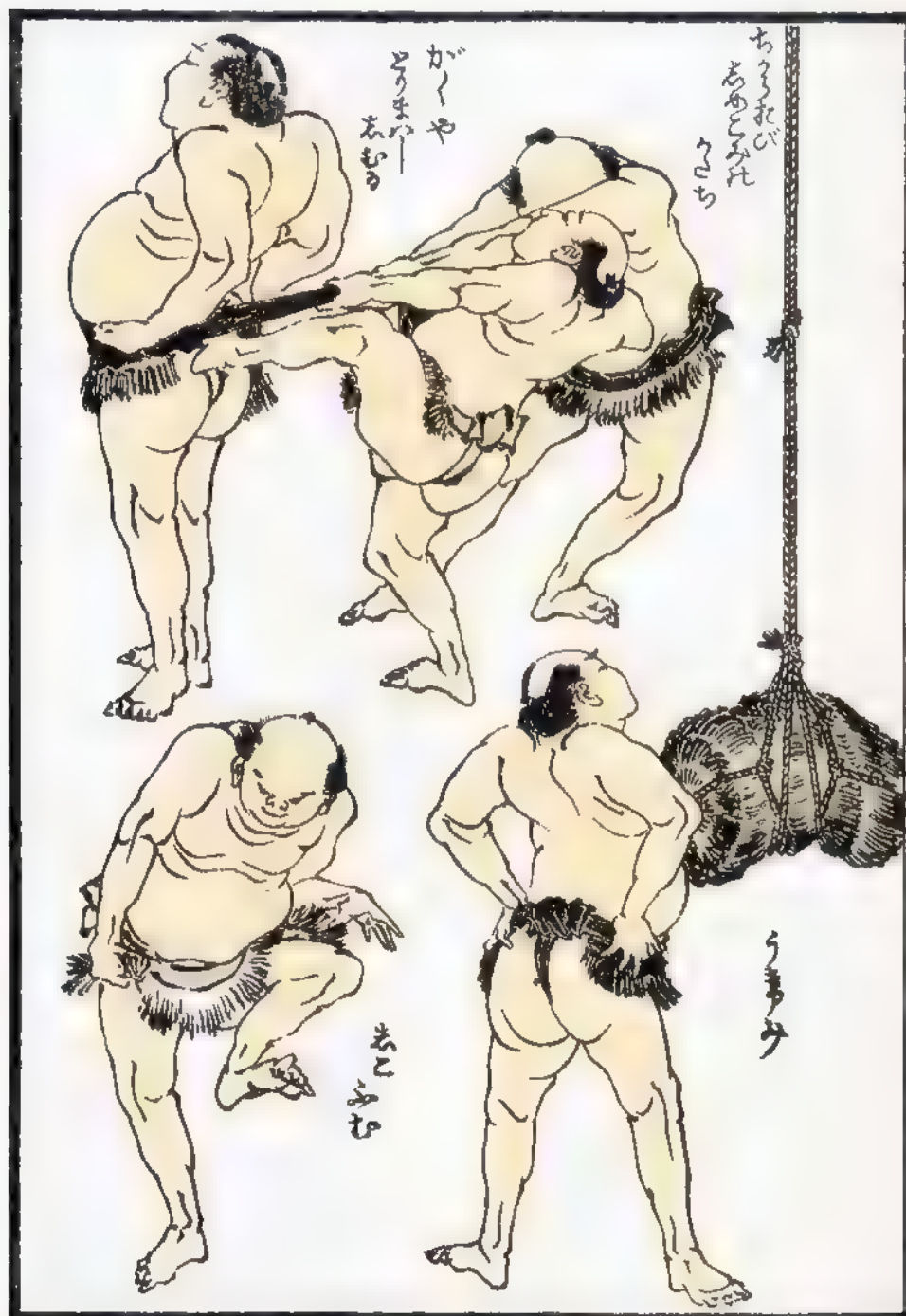


Plate 29. The *Manga* is peppered with diptychs showing Japanese men engaged in various sports and games. From the many dozen available, we present herewith six plates of these enticing little humans. This page shows some wrestlers, practicing perhaps in some mountain training ground where the bitter cold of winter, plus pounds and pounds of rice consumed each

day, harden and fatten the huge beasts. The man with the fan is the referee, and at the end of each match he will incline his fan solemnly toward the winner.



Plate 30. Each of the pages of sportsmen reproduced in this anthology is one half of a formal double-page spread. The left-hand side of the present drawing has already appeared on page 18, where it has been printed by the original woodblock method used by Hokusai. The reader should compare the present lithographed version with the original to gain an understanding

of the technical problems involved. These acrobats are practicing common contortionists' tricks.



北條河原一景

十四

Plate 31. Spear drill of the samurai. The spears have been specially made for practice drills and bear padded tips. Samurai, who served no constructive purpose in a Japan that had been at peace for nearly 300 years, spent much of their time practicing warlike games. Each samurai has carefully tucked up his kimono, a precaution he took whenever trouble loomed. Today, in the

theater, it is a pregnant moment when some bully, about to waylay innocent passers-by, purposefully tucks up his garments. Then the audience can be sure that evil is about to occur.



Plate 32. Six samurai with bow and arrow. The upper three are at court, practicing their archery. Two appear in long divided skirts, whose manipulation by present-day actors is one of the most pleasing conventions of the stage. The bottom samurai are dressed in traditional hunting attire, a costume into which actresses love to climb when masquerading as men. It is most becoming



Plate 33. In Genroku times (1688-1703), the nostalgic Elizabethan age of Japanese history, some improvisator happened to dance in public what became known as the *yakko-odori*, the servant's dance. The *yakko* was the lowest-ranking retainer of a feudal lord, and as such did all the menial tasks, while at the same time presuming to bully the commoners with

whom he came in touch. The *yakko-odori* satirized his pretensions, and here Hokusai, having his commoner's revenge, catches the nonsense of the satirical dance, which is still performed in geisha-houses

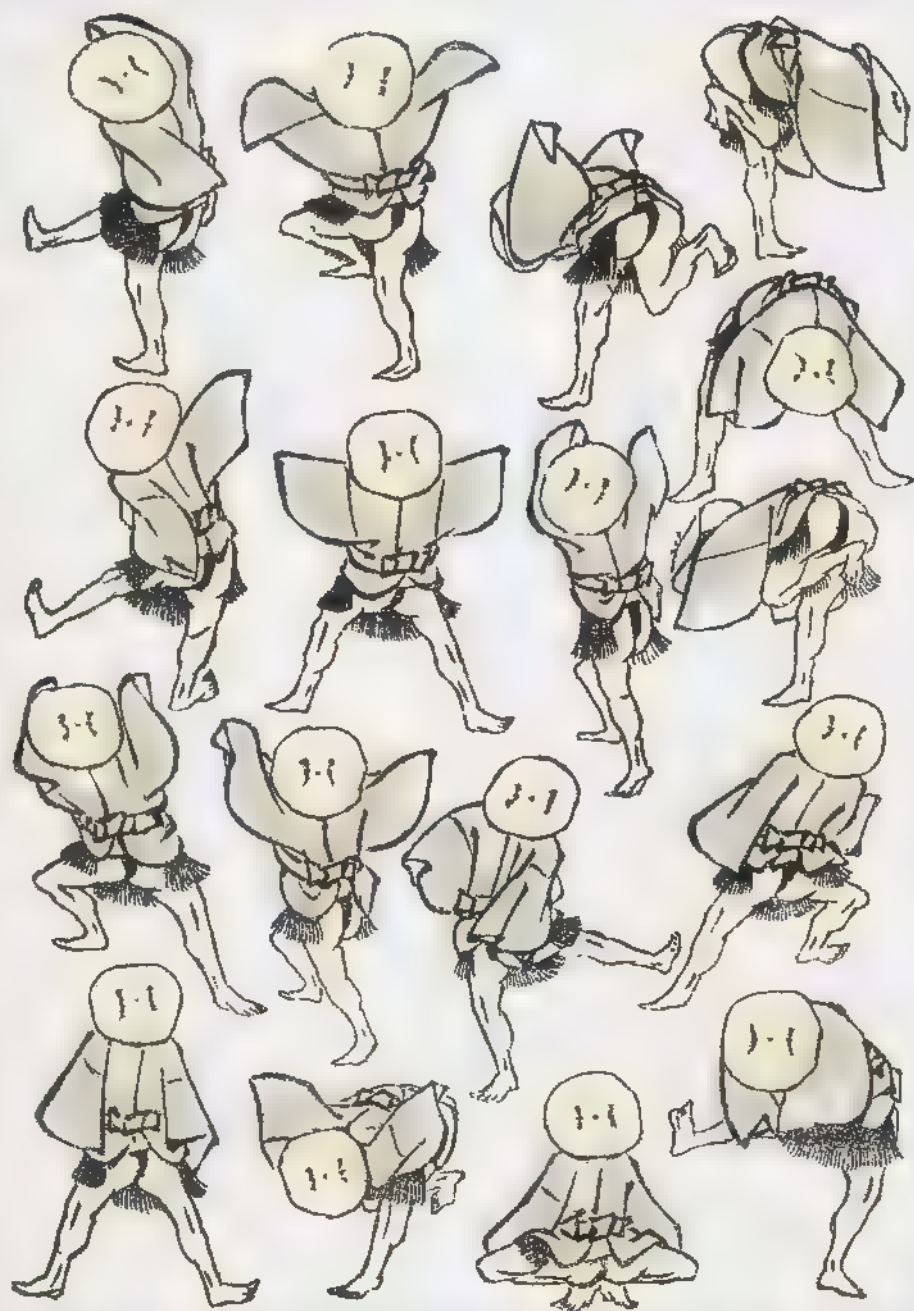


Plate 34. Samurai practicing horsemanship. The tradition of both China and Japan produced highly successful conventions for drawing horses, and even today homes in Asia are apt to contain depictions of this animal. The stone-rubbings from Central China are particularly decorative. Hokusai often drew horses, sometimes with success, at other times, as here, with no

great facility. Observe the tail-covers used on three of the horses; these were common for ceremonial occasions.



Plate 35. These five drawings conclude the games section and illustrate popular self-defense holds. Upper: How to disengage an assailant when he grabs you by the collar. M'ddle right: Another way to disengage a grabbing hand. Middle left: *Sennbiki*, or the thousand-mile drag, used to capture an assailant. Bottom right: How to hold with one hand. Bottom left: How to

prevent the hold. Hokusai loved technical details like this and from the *Manga* a sizable collection of sketches could be made showing countryside folklore



Plate 36. This famous sketch shows the hard lot of the workingman, and at the same time allows Hokusai to delight his audience with another sly dig at the petty samurai who, while little more than servants, lorded it over the commoners. The retainer left holds a *hasami-bako*, traveling trunk, containing his lord's clothes. The middle retainer is the *zori-mochi* sandal bearer. As

shown by his two swords, the man in black is a true samurai, although low ranking. The sign on the door reads: "Do not leave open. Keep clean." The scribbling on the wall inside shows two lovers' names, inscribed under an umbrella, which serves the same purpose in Japan as does a heart with initials intertwined in the West



Plates 37-38. No presentation of Japan's popular art would be complete if it did not contain at least one scene in which mice play the roles of men, and none could be more appropriate than this view of *Kakure-sato*, the mythical hide-out of mice. Here the boss sits atop rice bales and works his abacus. Others haul in a sack-load of gold coins. Three keep books on the riches, and others

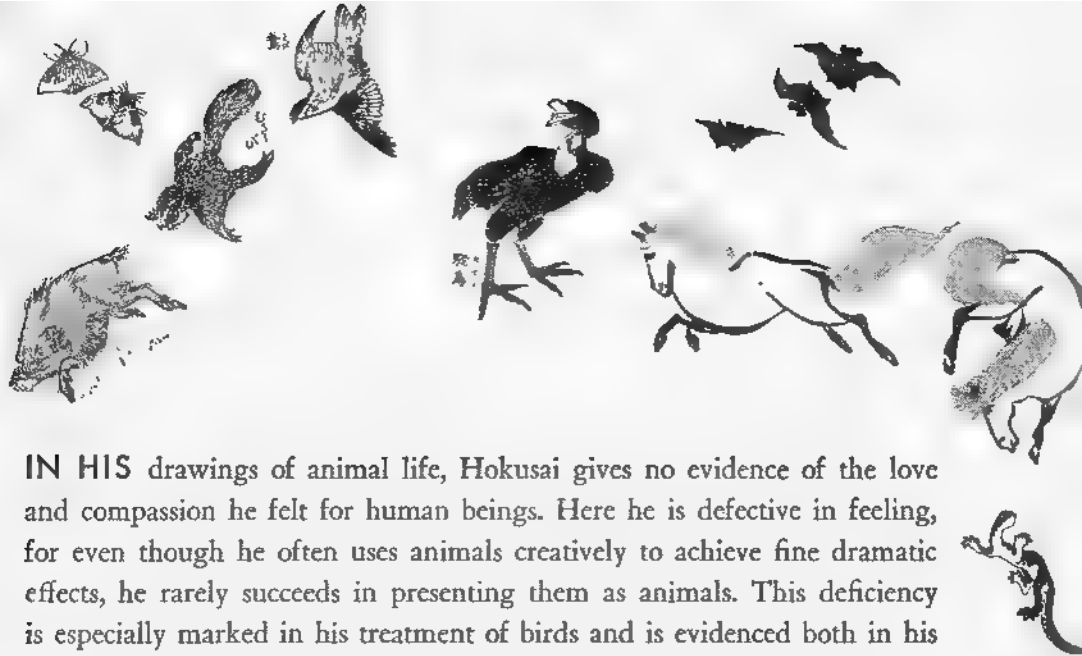
weigh baskets of coins.

The well-known tale of "The Rolling Rice Cakes" tells of a man who was lucky enough to penetrate into *Kakure-sato*. He had gone to his fields to gather firewood and, while eating lunch, allowed one of his rice cakes to roll into a hole in the ground. When he kneeled down to retrieve the cake, he heard tiny singing voices. Overcome by curi-

osity, he dropped all his rice cakes into the hole, and ended up by tumbling down himself. He was bedazzled by the rich kingdom he had uncovered, but the mice, although grateful for his rice cakes, insisted that he return home. As a present, they gave him a very small bale of rice and then dismissed him. But when he reached home he discovered that the tiny bale was a wonderful and



FAUNA



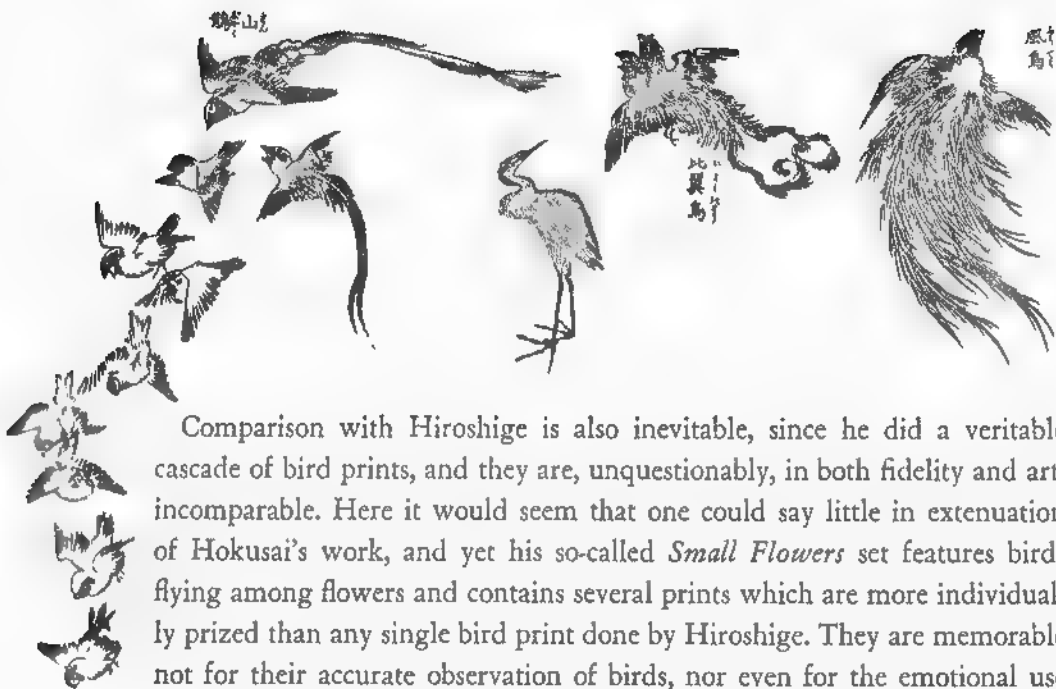
IN HIS drawings of animal life, Hokusai gives no evidence of the love and compassion he felt for human beings. Here he is defective in feeling, for even though he often uses animals creatively to achieve fine dramatic effects, he rarely succeeds in presenting them as animals. This deficiency is especially marked in his treatment of birds and is evidenced both in his sketches and in his prints.

Architecturally, Hokusai's birds are compelling; artistically, they are among the treasures of Asian design; but as birds they are a disappointment.

The same is even more true of his animals; those he knew, he did not draw well; those he imagined—his rhinoceros, for example—he failed to materialize. Occasionally, his pictures of mice combine subtle observation and excellent artistic execution, but with other animals he falls far short of what his colleagues were able to accomplish.

Two comparisons are inescapable. As for the first, Utamaro composed several books containing studies of nature: insects, life along the shore, the world in winter. They are rhapsodic accomplishments and combine art and observation admirably. Not only are they extraordinarily pleasing; they also report nature in exact scientific and emotional terms. Westerners ignorant of these Utamaro books have missed a vibrant experience in sheer loveliness and affection.

Nothing in Hokusai's animal prints or sketches compares with this work of Utamaro's in either beauty, observation, or depth of emotion; yet Hokusai has an accomplishment of his own and it seems to me that it is this: he presents wildlife in harsh, uncompromising terms, and in doing so he may actually come closer to the spirit of nature than did Utamaro. One can almost hear Hokusai growling: "It's all very well for Utamaro to show wildlife in soft, lovely colors and fine drawing. But he obviously knows nothing about how animals live. I know what's in their evil little hearts." Therefore, Hokusai's birds are invariably predators; his insects are obnoxious, his reptiles repulsive; his horses are usually untractable, while his imaginary tigers and lions are terrifying. In Hokusai's representations of animal life I have never found any affection, but I have found understanding. At least half of nature is cruel; and Hokusai so reports it.



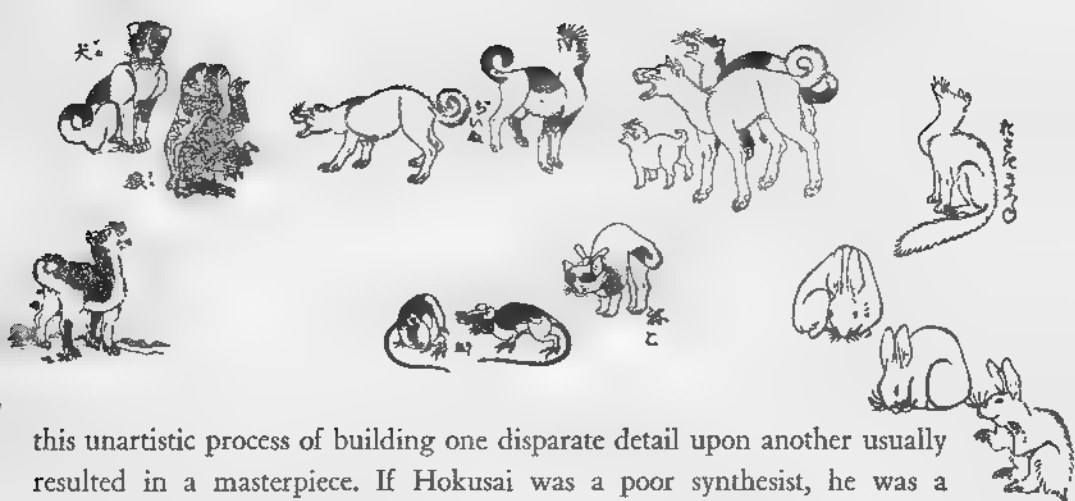
Comparison with Hiroshige is also inevitable, since he did a veritable cascade of bird prints, and they are, unquestionably, in both fidelity and art, incomparable. Here it would seem that one could say little in extenuation of Hokusai's work, and yet his so-called *Small Flowers* set features birds flying among flowers and contains several prints which are more individually prized than any single bird print done by Hiroshige. They are memorable not for their accurate observation of birds, nor even for the emotional use to which the inaccurately observed birds are put, but simply because visually Hokusai's combination of bird and flower and startling blue sky is highly pleasing to the eye. It is therefore irrelevant to argue that Hokusai's birds are not birds at all, but something else, because whatever they are, they yield wonderful pictures.

In the black-and-white pages of the *Manga*, unfortunately, all the defects of Hokusai's work with animals—and birds must be included in this category—are displayed, and none of the virtues; but careful and repeated study of the pages that follow will provide the student with much insight as to the way in which Hokusai approached this subject matter.

Again, the clue to his manner is particularism. He studies with equal attention each component part of a bird and draws it with meticulous care, but he never achieves any inner synthesis of what a bird is like. Bills, feathers, beaks, claws, even if drawn admirably each in its own way, do not, unfortunately, add up to a bird. They do not create an illusion of *birdness*. Something else is required, and this something else—this glimpse into the inner essentials that differentiate birds from rocks or from people—escaped Hokusai.

This is doubly strange because his woodblock predecessors Torii Kiyomasa (1694-?1716) and Isoda Koryusai (fl. 1765-88) were skilled depicors of birds, so that an artistic convention was available for Hokusai to use, as his follower Hiroshige did; but for some reason Hokusai's preoccupation with particular details blinded him to the existence of the earlier convention.

Nevertheless, and we shall witness this phenomenon again when we study his approach to landscape, his weakness of particularism was offset by a gigantic capacity in composition, so that what he finally produced out of



this unartistic process of building one disparate detail upon another usually resulted in a masterpiece. If Hokusai was a poor synthesist, he was a marvelous designer.

Certain of the pages also illustrate one of the most perplexing, if completely trivial, problems of Japanese art; yet in its contemplation one comes to grips with an artistic problem of first-rate magnitude. Hokusai, like all Japanese artists, was quite incompetent in drawing dogs or puppies. Some of the most improbable monstrosities cluttering the pages of Japanese art purport to represent dogs; they are formless, misshapen, and characterless. If one artist alone, or one school or generation, exhibited this deficiency, it could be dismissed as chance aberration, but when all do, it becomes a problem of generic art.

The explanation seems simple. The earliest Japanese artists got off on the wrong foot, saw dogs improperly, depicted them so, and no successor ever got the matter straightened out. Art is, far more than we like to think, an agreed-upon convention, and two supporting illustrations of this fact come to mind. The first Japanese artist in Nagasaki to draw a picture of a Dutch ship—that strange being—spelled the peculiar Dutch name of the ship incorrectly. All subsequent Japanese artists followed the same spelling, even though the ship rode in the harbor before them. More disastrous, intellectually, was the European convention that landscapes are always brown. Billions of human eyes had seen them, over the centuries, as vivid green and purple and flaming scarlet, but artists continued to paint them as brown. The virtue of men like Monet, Hiroshige, and Turner was that they finally saw artistically what billions of ordinary eyes had seen before: landscapes are not brown. Unfortunately, no Japanese woodblock artist ever saw a dog.

Plate 40. The concert of the three hanging monkeys is common in Japanese art; and one of the most popular implements among Americans living in Japan is the tiny cast-iron monkey with one arm extended upward, the other downward; a chain can be fashioned by linking several together, ideal for hooking lanterns onto beams. Hokusai also shows us his version of a mythical

Chinese beast, although it is not too clear whether he was meaning to depict the *kirin*, a creature of good fortune composed of equal parts of dragon, cow, and turtle, which in a more modern version serves as the trademark of one of Japan's best beers, or the *suisai*, "water rhinoceros," shown differently in Plate 152. The imaginary *kirin*, incidentally, turned out to be so similar to

the giraffe, when this latter was first seen in Japan, that the same name was applied to the actual animal.



Plates 41-42. These pages, which faced each other in the *Manga*, show with what care Hokusai worked to create his pictures of the animal world. They contain much excellent drawing, but they also exhibit such fundamental errors in observation as to make one question the manner in which the artist went about his work. From the careful drawing of the snake one would conclude

that Hokusai intended these sketches to be anatomically correct. Yet at the same time he gives his grasshoppers eight legs each, whereas even the most casual inspection of this fairly common insect would have shown this to be an error. Similar inaccuracies are found in most of his sketches of insects; yet he does succeed in creating a sensation of a living creature,

which was his intention. Aesthetically, the drawing of the salamander and the snail are most pleasing, since Hokusai achieves his effects with a strong, spare line.

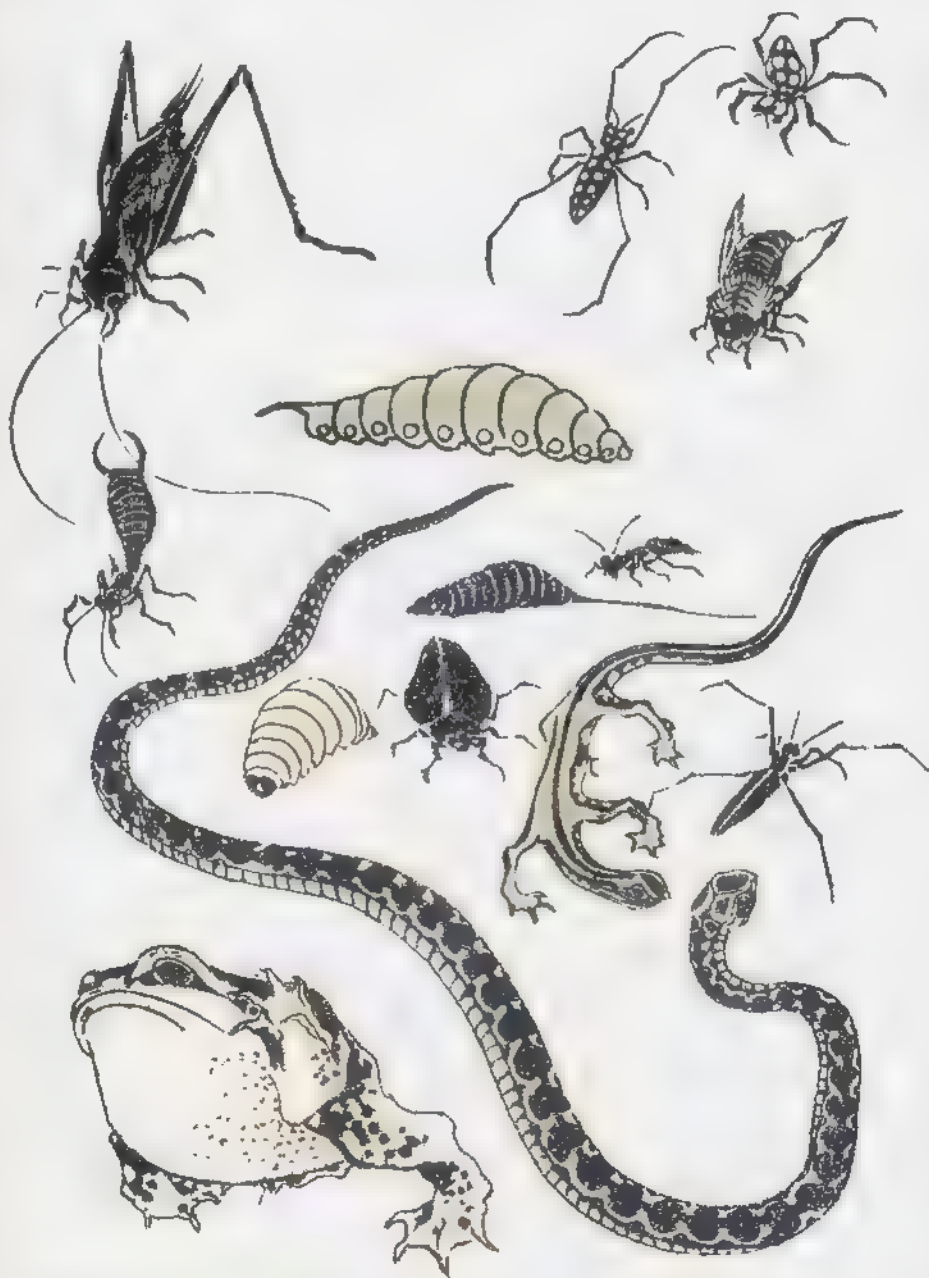




Plate 43. To a Japanese reader this page, so undistinguished to the Western eye, is crowded with allusion. The long-haired turtle, which also appears in Plate 39, is a symbol of longevity. Two of the three turtles at the right were to be used again in the *Manga* in practically identical positions (see Plate 52) and as the subject of a famous print. The large crayfish (ebi), left

margin, is the trademark of one of the most famous traditional actor-names in the Japanese theater, Ebizo, and appears on many prints of that line of idols with startling effect, especially when the crayfish crawls up from the hem of the kimono. The octopus has a special, and indecent, role in Japanese folklore, since it is supposed to rise from the deep and embrace wives who are

dissatisfied with their husbands' love-making. Certain common Japanese crabs, with red pincers, are said to be the reincarnations of the Heike warriors who were drowned at sea in the great naval engagement of Dan-no-Ura in 1185. And the clam, which symbolizes woman's capacity to make love, has been used repeatedly in erotic prints.



Plate 44. Top right: a sleepy owl, later used with enormous success by Hiroshige for one of his best-loved prints. Top center: eastern kingfisher. Top left: a kind of reed-warbler, with four young in a grassy nest below. Center: fighting cock with hen. Mid-left: two partridges, much appreciated in Japan as game birds. Lower left: a pair of didappers or small grebes. Lower right: if

Hokusai had not labeled these two odd birds *karakun* (a type of turkey), it would be difficult to guess his intentions.

Observe how for five of the birds Chinese names are given, with accompanying *hiragana* text, while for two whose Chinese names were not known, colloquial Japanese names were given in the syllabary only.



Plate 45. These birds, from Volume IV, show with what freedom Hokusai drew in that volume, changing from his hard-outline style to a more impressionistic manner. The two ducks lower right are masterful as an example of how observation and skilled drawing can be united to achieve a gratifying result. Also interesting is the use of the gray to produce additional

artistic effects. Like the rest of the *Manga*, this page was, of course, first cut onto three separate wood blocks, one each for the black, the gray, and the pale pink. It was then printed three separate times by hand, identical guide marks on the three wood blocks being used to insure registry. This and the following page faced each other in the original also.



Plate 46. This page is especially interesting artistically since it illustrates Hokusai's problems with birds. The small birds flying are extremely wooden; the two lower right look more like mountain goats squaring off for a butting contest than birds; the contortions of the hawk are neither anatomically correct nor artistically pleasing; and even the geese in flight are awkward.

This page, which can be dated 1816, shows, in the hawk's head and eye, that Hokusai had already developed his ornithological trademark—an unusually predatory appearance—which in his later prints he invariably gave all of his birds. In the great flower prints, dated about 1829, even his songbirds look like hawks.



Plates 47-48. This diptych, captioned "The Twelve Branches," shows the twelve signs of what might be loosely called the Japanese zodiac. Since these animals also provide names for the years in the twelve-year cycle used in Japanese chronology, they are of double importance. In the sequence used by the Japanese the animals are: rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake,

horse, sheep (sometimes goat), monkey, cock, dog, and boar. These "zodiac" names, when combined with a second series called the ten "calendar" signs, form a sixty-year cycle which formerly exerted much influence on Japanese life, an influence which still persists in occasional superstitions. Thus a girl born in a certain one of the Horse years is supposed to be so spirited she would

surely kill her husband, and as a consequence is often fated for spinsterhood. Few marriages are celebrated in the year of the Monkey, since the Japanese word for the animal, *saru*, also means "to divorce." A man born in the year of the Rat is sure to be very thrifty and to accumulate a large fortune.





十二支
子にー



Plate 49. At Plate 34, I commented on the popularity of the horse as a decorative motif in Asian homes. Recently, horses have enjoyed an equal acceptance in Western houses. This has arisen from several causes. First has been the export from China of handsome, large, vigorous stone-rubbings, done either in jet black or appealing brick-red, of bas-reliefs from Central

China. Second, the upheaval of World War II threw onto the market hundreds of handsome T'ang terra-cotta statues of horses. Third, an otherwise undistinguished Japanese woodblock artist named Mokuchu Urushibara, while living in London, began a series of four black-and-white prints of horses in spirited poses (very much in the style of that at the bottom of the opposite page), which

promptly circulated the globe in a burst of popular enthusiasm; they are probably the most widely distributed Japanese prints in history and have been repeated even in the form of ash trays, earrings, and dinner plates. Here Hokusai shows that he too had studied Chinese horses.



Plate 50. The sacred white horse at the top is a *shimme*, meaning that it has been offered to a Shinto shrine for the use of spirits who must make divine journeys. The decorative paper hanging on a stick from the back of the horse is a standard Shinto ceremonial device which can still be seen throughout Japan. Its origin is obscure, but its use is highly decorative, snowy

paper being folded in traditional patterns. Since the giving of actual horses is beyond the financial capacity of the average Japanese, shrines often contain small enclosures into which wooden plaques called *ema*, each decorated with a painted horse, can be placed. Today such *ema*, especially if antique, are often of considerable value as folk art.



Plate 51. Like most Japanese, Hokusai was preoccupied with the problem of longevity. Living to be sixty or seventy or eighty was in itself an enviable accomplishment, and although by our system of counting he died at 89, in the Japanese system he was 90, a fact which must have accorded him intense pleasure. On these two pages, not facing in the original *Manga*, he depicts

two of the three most popular symbols of longevity: the crane and the turtle. The caption reads: "Crane of Sakurada in Owari Province [now Aichi Prefecture]."



Plate 52. Here the characters read: "Sayama Pond of Musashi Province [now in Tokyo]." The subject matter of each of these two facing plates served as the basis for important color prints, the crane having appeared in several different versions and the turtles having been used in identical form in a well-known scroll-form print. In many cases it is impossible to determine

whether such sketches were done before or after the color prints with which they are associated. Here, however, as we have seen on page 35, we can be sure that the sketches antedated the color prints.

These are handsome sketches and among Hokusai's best portrayals of fauna. The grasses accompanying the crane are particularly satisfying.



世藏
換出迄

Plate 53. The caption says that this is an *okami*, or wolf, and it is fortunate that Hokusai labeled his animal, for otherwise it would probably be mistaken for a wildcat, a lynx, or a mythical beast. As a zoological drawing, it must be counted a failure, for the forward-curving fangs, the lionlike claws, and the catlike tail are all incorrect. Yet the design, with the bright full moon shown

by means of white paper, and the well-suggested foliage are excellent and create a real sense of wildlife at early dusk when the moon is rising.



Plate 54. If Hokusai failed signally with the wolf, which he may never have seen in real life, he succeeded notably with his white mice, which are shown here nibbling at a double-tiered *mochi* cake (see caption to Plate 9) which has been prepared as a New Year's offering at the household shrine. The caption reads "White Mice," these small animals being the personal messengers

of the god Daikoku-ten, the dispenser of good fortune. The term "white mouse" is also applied to a loyal retainer in business who serves his master's family faithfully, working zealously to insure their well-being and prosperity.



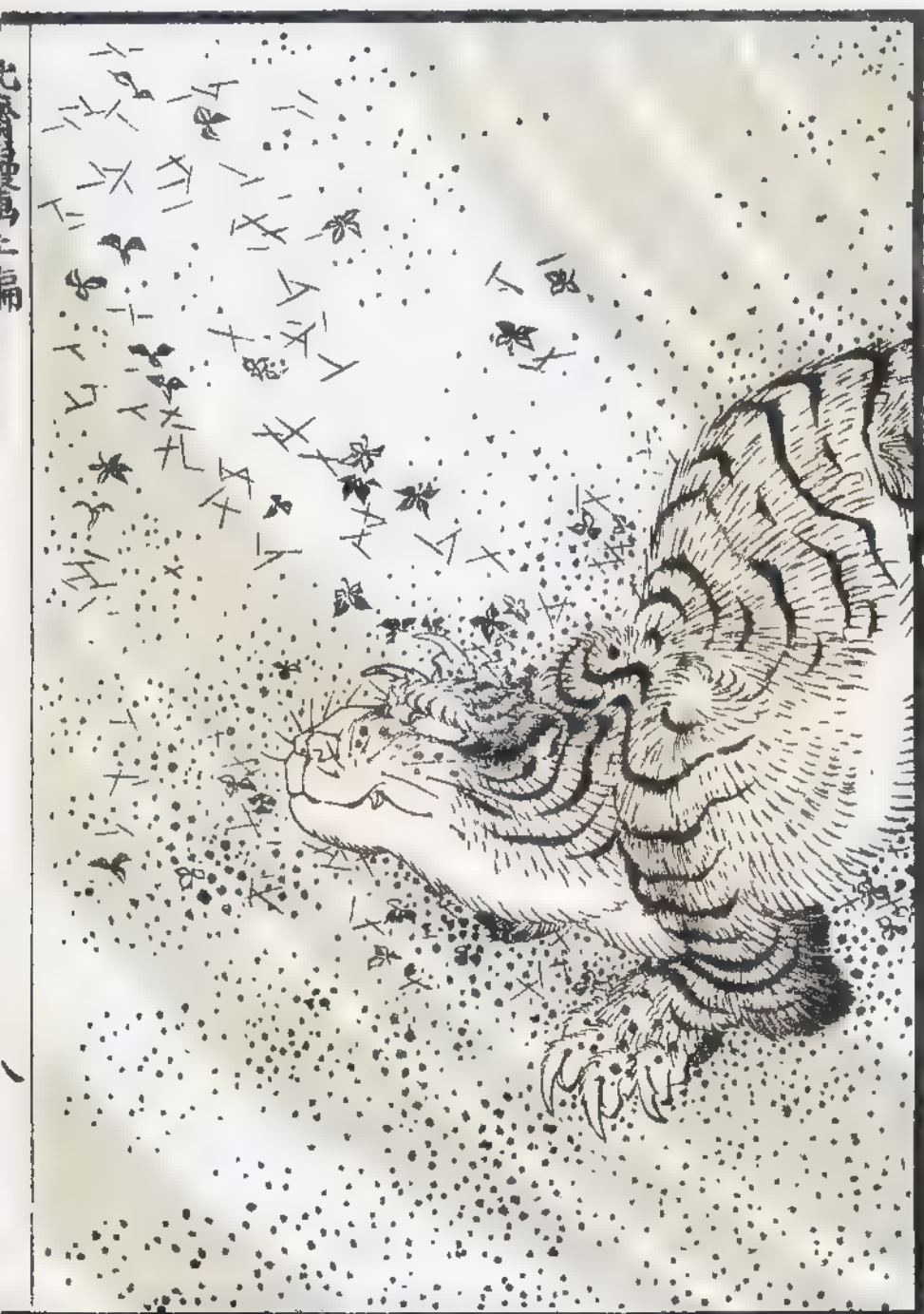
Plates 53-56. This distinguished sketch, captioned "Running Tiger," is noteworthy in that C. J. Holmes, in 1909, uncovered at least four preliminary studies for it. Later some question was raised as to whether these trials might not really be later copies by students, but I am inclined to accept them for what Holmes thought them to be. Two of the studies are reproduced in

Holmes' book on Hokusai or can be seen at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University. Subsequent scholarship will decide whether they are indeed Hokusai's work.

We must remember that Hokusai could never have seen a tiger, even though it was one of the beasts occurring most frequently in classical Chinese art. It seems to me probable that Hokusai would have want-

ed to make several preliminary studies of an animal he had never seen in order to work out the most satisfactory effect.

At any rate, the finished job which we see here is a masterful portrayal of an animal caught in a dusty wind such as we saw earlier in Plates 25-26. As a matter of fact, I think the scattering pine needles and tiny leaves create a finer effect here. As for the tiger,



he is a properly ferocious
beast, and even if his fangs do
point the wrong way, he cre-
ates an illusion of terror and
force. It was plates like this
that astonished Europe when
the *Manga* first exploded in
French ateliers.



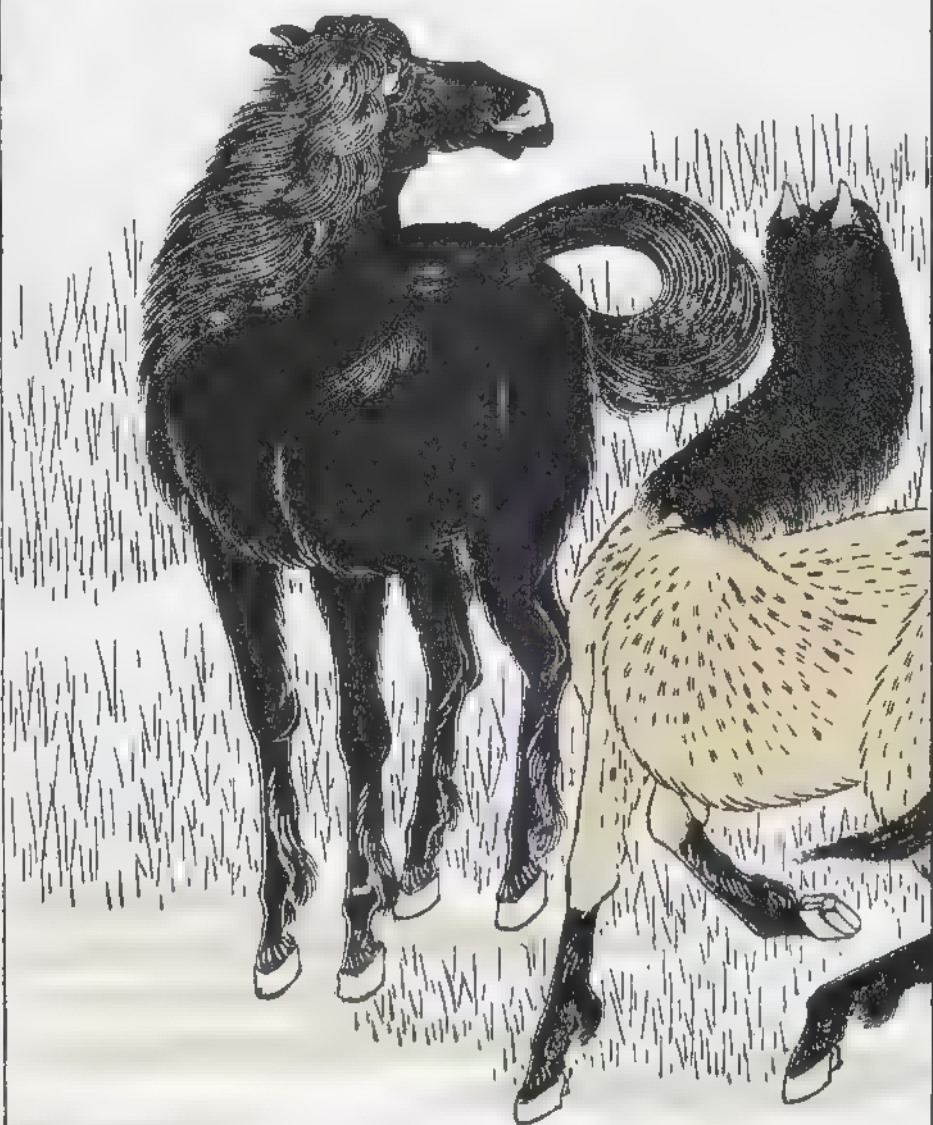
Plates 57-58. This spirited sketch, captioned "Wild Horses," served Hokusai well. It did not appear in the *Manga* until about 1875, but as early as 1830 a handsome vertical color print had appeared whose foreground consisted of the present left-hand horse about to be nipped on the hock by the right-hand horse. (See Plate 6 in *Hokusai*, Vol. 1 of *Library of Japanese Art*, Tuttle,

1955.) The dappled horse in the center was omitted from the print in order to compress the design into a long, narrow pattern. The result is most pleasing, and has an added interest for the reader of this anthology in that in the distance the horse we have already seen wading through the flooded rice field in Plate 10 now fords a river. The big, handsome print contains nine horses,

and I suppose that when all of Hokusai's extant drawings have been assembled, we will find similar essays for most of the other six horses. Background details of the finished print are markedly superior to the unsatisfactory and highly stylized grass presented here.

野馬 (ノウバ)

七



野馬のひま



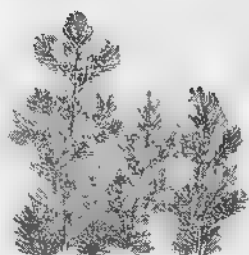
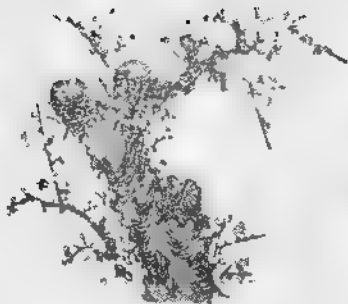
Plate 59. Hokusai probably saw a camel. Contemporary records report on the intense excitement aroused when one was first imported and exhibited in Edo during the early years of the 19th century. Police were required to keep the crowd in line, and vials of the beast's urine were sold as guaranteed love philters.

The captions read "Camel" and "Palm Tree," the latter

bearing more resemblance to bamboo than to palm. The attendant is presumably an Arab who accompanied the first camel, but the clawed feet are Hokusai's personal invention.



FLORA



IF HOKUSAI drew dogs inadequately because the tradition of Japanese art dictated an improper convention—and this applied in general to most Japanese drawing of most animal life except birds and insects—this deficiency was compensated for when it came time for him to draw grasses, flowers, and trees. Now one of the world's foremost artistic traditions existed to support the artist and to fructify his own observation. No school of art ever known has excelled the Chinese-Japanese tradition in depicting grasses and trees.

Hokusai was deeply imbued with the fundamentals of the classical Asian school; even though he could not justly be considered a classical artist, he comprehended the essence of the traditional style and built his own upon it. Furthermore, as he grew older, he tended to return to the principles of Chinese classical art and with its help to achieve certain of his masterworks.

It is appropriate here to review some of the principles in which a young Japanese boy who wanted to become a classical artist was trained, this regimen having been picked up from Chinese masters. He spent upwards of nine months learning to draw the bamboo, for it was believed that if one could draw this subtle plant one could draw anything. Various styles had developed for representing the poetic bamboo, and while none of these conventions approached the technique which a Western artist would have selected to achieve a similar purpose, and while none actually represented the bamboo as it really was, any one of the styles evoked a true memory of the bamboo. More important: all the styles fitted harmoniously into the general patterns of Oriental art.

After nearly a year of trying to draw the bamboo in simple, sure brush strokes, consecutively linked and unobtrusive, the apprentice was permitted to go on to the pine tree, which posed quite another problem: that of representing mass and grandeur in the simplest form. Again the tradition was immensely effective and harmoniously adjusted to Asian art principles.

Finally, although some schools introduced this next part of the curriculum after the bamboo and before the pine, the novice spent the better part of another year mastering the plum, its combination of angular branches and delicate blossoms forming a neat exercise in control of mood, line, and



poetic imagination. Not until a young man could draw with facility the bamboo, the pine, and the plum was he ready for an introduction into the deeper mysteries of the artist's craft; but many found that by the time they had mastered these fundamentals, the ultimate truth was already upon them.

The Western student who seeks further understanding of the classical curriculum from which Hokusai borrowed so much can do no better than study patiently—but never too long at one sitting—the two remarkable Chinese books which crystalized this curriculum and which, when imported into Japan, where they were repeatedly reprinted in sumptuous editions, created a profound impression. Publication of the more famous *Mustard Seed Garden* had begun in 1679, offering a complete practical course in art principles, showing the student by means of colored woodblock prints how he must draw bamboo, pine, and plum, plus all the later additions which go to make up a painting, such as rocks, water, clouds, forests. People are conspicuously absent, or insignificant, for a true picture was primarily landscape, and all landscape started with the bamboo.

The second instruction course, *Ten Bamboo Studio*, antedated the *Mustard Seed Garden*, publication having commenced in China in 1627. When introduced into Japan, it did not enjoy quite the popularity of the younger book. But together the two served to elucidate the classical tradition, and from them such Japanese woodblock artists as Nishikawa Suke-nobu (1671-1751), Suzuki Harunobu (1725-70), and Hokusai freely borrowed.*

In the few pages that follow we are to see Hokusai at his poetic greatest. Deep in the profound traditions of his race, yet free within his own strong spirit, he will draw for us some grasses, a few bamboos, some pine trees against a hill. He will demonstrate with what superb artistry he has mastered the fundamentals of his art.

Since we shall be seeing Hokusai's affinity for the classic subject matter

* *Ten Bamboo Studio*, by Hu Cheng yen. Published from colored woodblock prints in China 1627-33. *Mustard Seed Garden*, edited by Li Yu, illustrated principally by Wang An-chieh. Published from colored woodblock prints in China 1679-1701, with a final volume appearing in 1818. Selections from each, reproduced in color and accompanied by critical summaries, have been edited by Jan Tschichold. The first was published by the Beechhurst Press, New York, 1952; the latter by George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1952.



of Chinese art, it might prove appropriate to consider briefly what position he might have attained had he applied himself exclusively to painting rather than to woodblock prints. I doubt that he would have amounted to much. As a painter he lacked the poetic synthesis that marks the greatest Japanese workmen in that field, and he fails to approach even the lesser figures. Many of his paintings have survived, but they accomplish little; I find them quite tedious.

On the other hand, as a woodblock artist he demonstrated surprising ability to catch the inner values of Chinese classical painting, and one of the main reasons why we prize his later series is that in them he achieves a kind of Japanese-Chinese fusion quite lacking in his paintings. What we seem to have in Hokusai is a fortunate example of a man whose artistic capacity reached fruition only when applied to one specific technique. If he had been so unlucky as not to have discovered the woodblock medium, he might well have remained an obscure and unproductive fourth-rate painter.

At any rate, the lovely accomplishments we are about to see in the next pages never reappeared in his paintings; but they grew into even finer form in his color prints.

I must add a personal comment. The selection of these particular pages, leading up as they do the diptych which shows the flora in place against fragmentary landscapes, was a deep pleasure. Hokusai was preëminently a landscapist; here we see him at the moment of birth. Here we see some of the most beautiful work he was ever to do, and we stand awed at its simplicity.

Several critics, reviewing this book before it went to the printer, objected to the inclusion of Hokusai's large flowers. I grant that they are an intrusion: bold, awkward, un-flowery things. But from these architectural forms Hokusai was to build his superb series of masterpieces, the *Large Flowers* and the *Small Flowers*. I have never been able to appreciate these prints for their flowers, and I think the sketches reproduced here explain why; but as art forms they are magnificent. And it is Hokusai the artist, not Hokusai the botanist, that we cherish.

Plate 60. How lovely this page is! How Japanese! With what economy of effort poetic results are achieved! The maple leaves against the moon recall a score of autumn nights, the barely-indicated grasses at the bottom of the page recall Asia's classical landscape painters. At Plate 66, I say that I think Hokusai draws his bamboo poorly, and usually he does. But here he achieves

perfection — not in Sukenobu's subtle, poetic style, but in Hokusai's virile, wind-swept manner. I find this page a great joy.



Plate 61. Top left: Egyptian kidney beans. Top right: pomegranate. Center: white muskmelon. Center left: white radish. Center right: white gourd. Bottom left: ordinary gourd. Bottom right: eggplant. Two of these vegetables are noteworthy. The white radish, *daikon*, sometimes grows to a length of four feet and when pickled like sauerkraut is one of the most

delicious and ubiquitous of Japanese foods. It serves a hidden dietary purpose: since Japanese insist upon eating polished white rice, they lose all the vitamins this natural grain contains; but since *daikon* is pickled in rice bran, many of the lost vitamins are returned in this way. Rice without *daikon* would mean beriberi; rice with *daikon* means health. And the man who sees, on New Year's

Day, Mount Fuji, a hawk, and an eggplant is forever blessed. Some of the finest color prints depict men accidentally glimpsing these three lucky symbols.



Plate 62. There is a good deal of quiet charm here. The flowers are brittle and hard, yet they create a memory of hot summer days. The iris, which blooms in late spring throughout Japan and has been used immemorially for artistic decoration, is here presented with much masculine vigor.



Plate 63. This swirling, poetic page of bare branches and twigs is one of the most poetic and lovely in the *Manga*. Even to look at it casually induces a sense of joy and well-being. I know of few that have given me more constant pleasure or a deeper sense of what Hokusai was trying to do in this series of books. At the risk of elaborating upon a page which is

already perfect, I must point out the subtle design that starts at the lower left corner and swings, in a splendid curve, into the center of the page, from where it reverses its tendency, disappearing at the upper right corner. Opposed to this is a strong straight line cutting from top left to bottom right, broken by a delicately balanced curve coming out from the left margin.



Plate 64. I find Hokusai's drawings of flowers hard and unpleasing. Compared with many of the delightful flowers included by Hiroshige in his prints, they are bleak indeed. This representation of the *asagao* (morning glory) illustrates the problem. Both flowers and leaves are metallic, while the vines twist about in harsh, contorted patterns rather than in the

flow that normally marks this plant. An even more typical case of brittle drawing will be found in the following plate, and while this anthology was being prepared several critics objected to the inclusion of these two plates, holding that they did a disservice to the spirit of the *Manga*. Why they were included will be explained on the next page.



Plate 63. This large, metallic sketch of the *yama-botan* (wild peony) has been included to remind the reader how poorly Hokusai drew individual flowers, but also to remind him that it was out of such inadequate drawing that Hokusai created his profound color prints of flowers. Both the small, squarish prints, which include birds, and the large oblong prints, which usually

concentrate on flowers set against simple backgrounds, are striking and successful art. Many collectors prize these bold flower prints above any other Hokusai, but I can never feel that the flowers are anything other than excuses for arranging large patterns of color and form, just as I can scarcely believe that this present sketch shows a real flower.



山牡丹

Plate 66. Hokusai presents many impressions of the bamboo, but none, I feel, so fine as those more poetic representations made in black and white by Sukenobu. Hokusai seems to miss the soft, yielding quality of the bamboo, but in this page he does indicate its essential nature. The two examples caught in the rain are well done, even though the leaves are unnecessarily

heavy if one studies other bamboos in the *Mustard Seed Garden* and in the work of Sukenobu. On the other hand, the young bamboo that runs up the right-hand margin is awkwardly done, indeed, but there will be other instances in the *Manga* in which this sovereign tree, the basis of so much Asian art, will be done better,



Plate 67. This page of flowering plum shows that when Hokusai approached a subject that itself had strong form, as opposed to the yielding form of the bamboo, he could achieve handsome results. The plum, first of the Japanese trees to flower—sometimes even in snowy January—is in many respects a more alluring tree than the more famous cherry, which

puts forth its flowers only when spring has warmed the earth. Westerners should also understand that by Japanese standards the most evocative trees are not those which stand well rounded and perfect, but those, like the lower-right example, which from apparently dead stumps shoot forth a final, challenging shaft of beauty.

The so-called plum which

bears the name *ume* in Japanese is, technically speaking, a species of flowering apricot. But such is the force of tradition that to call it anything other than plum would, at this stage, be little short of pedantic. The fruit is so small and green and scrawny that the mistake of the earliest translators, which we now follow, is quite understandable.



Plate 68. The *Manga* contains several excellent studies of pine trees, this being a strong, average example. To the American eye, accustomed to the white pine of the East and to the symmetrical blue spruce of the West, the reddish-barked Japanese pine, with its oddly skewed trunk and gap-toothed upper structure, is often an initial disappointment. But when a Japanese sees

these noble old trees lining the modern Tokaido road, where his ancestors have seen them for the last 500 years, or when the Western visitor sees them along the palace moat in central Tokyo, each begins to appreciate these handsome trees. Either alone, or in a mass, they are vibrant.



Plate 69. Suddenly Hokusai is no longer analyzing individual trees. Here, in sketches of snow-laden trees, he is creating elements that can be fitted into landscapes. And what superb elements they are. Note the straw snow-guards on the upper-right tree.

雪の松

五



(V-14-R)

Plate 70. Of this page of force and repose, of storm and calm, one can only say that it is perfectly drawn and admirably composed. Each of these trees will later appear in landscapes.



Plate 71-72. Next, with an enviable conservatism of effort, Hokusai indicates how his trees ought to be used in drawing completed landscapes. He suggests that trees form the emphasis which give mountains life, that they should be massed into impressive bodies when single trees or groups of separately drawn trees would lack power; and he demonstrates how small

groups of trees can be used effectively in conjunction with rocks.

The bridge, with its weeping trees, lower right, is a masterful bit of impressionistic drawing, achieved with a minimum of line and effort.

This diptych tells us a great deal about Hokusai's attitude toward landscape, and merits repeated study, for in it we can see how he visualized

the individual components from which he constructed his finished masterpieces. But this plate is an exception to Hokusai's habit of drawing items in a landscape each by itself. Here particularism gives way to impressionism.

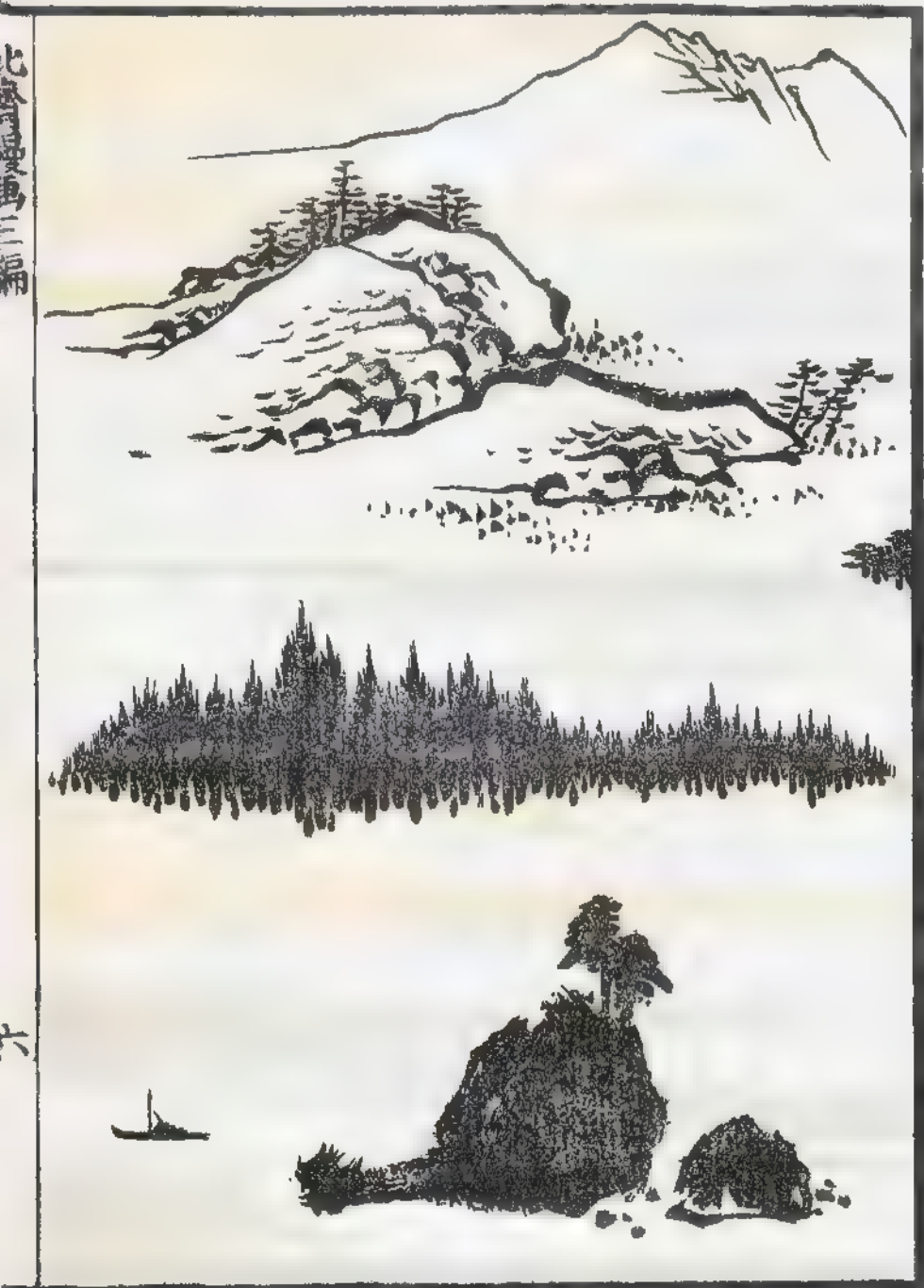




Plate 73. This is captioned "The Cedar of Yadate in Koshu [now Yamanashi]." It is powerful cryptomerias like this that line the approaches to the mausoleums of Nikko, giving that famed tourist attraction its gloomy, haunted lure. Throughout Japan, individual trees that stand out against the landscape either because of their size, isolation, or configuration are given names and are treasured,

often being deified. In all likelihood, this was probably one of the largest cryptomerias in Hokusai's day.

甲州
矢立の
松



LANDSCAPE



THE LANDSCAPE studies that Hokusai did in the *Manga* are by no means his best. Other books, for example *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji*, present superior works in which the full flavor of the great landscapist's genius exhibits itself. But if in the varied pages of the *Manga* we do not find Hokusai's cumulative landscape work, we nevertheless do discover many of the secrets of his art, and in a more personal form than elsewhere.

This point must be kept in mind when comparing the artist's various books: the great, formal landscape diptychs of the other series usually excel the landscape diptychs of the *Manga*; but the patient processes by which Hokusai built up his landscapes, and the understandings by which he progressed to his mastery of the art are best exhibited in the *Manga*. In fact only here are they adequately explained.

In the pages that follow, therefore, we will have an opportunity to study how Hokusai progressed beyond the classical mastery of bamboo, pine, and plum to a perception of landscape as a completed form. Here he analyzes rocks and waters and clouds. He is preoccupied with snow and the motion of waves, with mist and storm. He begins to fit birds into his landscapes, and men. And then, as if to presage the work by which he is best known, he throws off a view of Fuji, not his finest by any means and awkward if judged by later standards, but an authentic vision of the mountain that fascinated him throughout his life.

For a comprehension of Hokusai's attitude toward landscape, a study of the *Manga* is obligatory. Here Hokusai deals with landscape as almost a concrete thing, an art form to be learned through dissection and particularization. He does not belabor problems as repetitiously as does the *Mustard Seed Garden*, nor from as many varied approaches, but he is working in that tradition. Thus we have brilliant studies of the component parts of landscape, and in them we can visualize the artist's concept of the form.

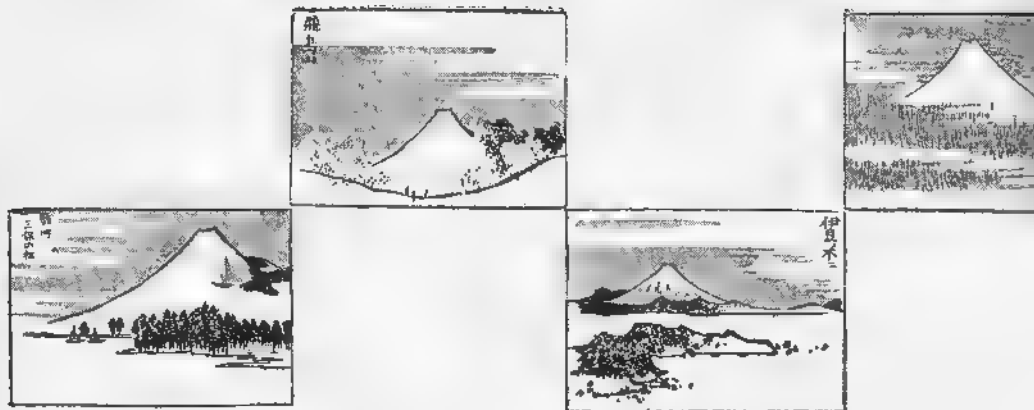
Actually, what Hokusai betrays to us in the *Manga* landscape passages is a deficiency in his artistic approaches to life, and if one seeks a fundamental reason why cultured Japanese have rarely found Hokusai to their taste, it can be isolated here. He deals with landscape, the prime subject of Asian art, in particularized rather than generalized form. For him a picture—



whether print or sketch—is apt to be a combination of isolated features, correctly drawn, handsomely arranged, and appropriately colored. But frequently the resulting picture fails to achieve the harmony and spiritual synthesis attained by the ultimate examples of Asian art.

Time and again Hokusai's finest color prints fail to achieve the synthesis that marks the finest Hiroshige prints or an ink drawing by the great Sesshu Toyo (1420-1506). In *Travels Around the Waterfalls of Eight Provinces* all components are presented with proper subordination, emphasis, style, and arrangement, but the prints nevertheless remain compartmentalized, and rarely does one feel overcome by the sensation of a waterfall's actually beating upon his consciousness. The same is true of that masterful series *Views of Famous Bridges*, or of the *Eight Views of the Ryukyu Islands*. His supreme series, *Imagery of the Poets of China and Japan*, presents a special case, for here the artist is endeavoring to create an unworldly fairy tale of lost memories, a summation of beauty as he has known it in its many forms, and he succeeds admirably. It is not appropriate to judge this majestic series by the ordinary canons of landscape art; these prints are something else—perfect and alone.

It is difficult to explain why Hokusai, who certainly knew the principles of Asian landscape, elected to ignore them and to develop for himself a set of brittle, yet rock-hard conventions enabling him to produce works which, if they have never been wholly acceptable to Asia, have nevertheless captivated the rest of the world. At one point I used to believe that this contempt for old canons was a generalized Hokusai trait, but that is not correct. Actually, of all the woodblock artists, he was the most classical, and his prints are crowded with classical overtones. Again, I thought that perhaps because of his training in a popular art he had dedicated himself to Japanese contemporary concepts rather than to Chinese classical ideas, but that is not true either, for in his historical drawings—to be seen shortly—and in series like the *Imagery of the Poets* he was again more Chinese in his derivations and inspirations than any of his woodblock contemporaries. Finally, I considered the possibility that Hokusai was congenitally disposed to resist classical concepts in landscape, although willing to accept them



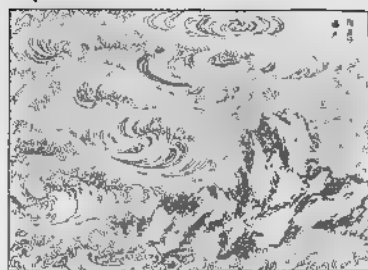
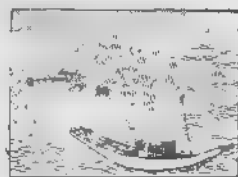
in other art forms, such as historical scenes, and there seems to be some evidence of such a propensity; but then one is left an equally perplexing problem: why did this Japanese peasant boy remain bound by certain classical conventions while remaining free to develop other aspects of his artistic personality along violently radical new avenues?

I think the answer is that Hokusai was one of those fortunate men who are able to see landscape in highly personalized visions. He was one with Claude Lorraine and John Constable. He saw the world particularized, constructed of components each of which could be individually comprehended, the whole joining together in a pleasing, architectural pattern. Any portion of a Hokusai landscape, if framed by lines which produce geometrically pleasing dimensions, is apt to yield a satisfying landscape, which is also true of most Lorraine and Constable canvases.

The limitation of the Hokusai vision—a weakness shared by Lorraine and Constable—was that it fell short of the harmonious synthesis that marked the vision of the greatest landscape masters, men like Sesshu, Cezanne, Monet, and Hiroshige. We have no right to demand of Hokusai the poetic synthesis that these men accomplished. It was beyond him.

Hokusai's principal merit as a landscape artist was his constant willingness to rearrange nature according to his own artistic requirements. Thus, although he was limited in that he was a particularist, he refused to allow the particular elements comprising a landscape to dictate how the landscape should be presented to the viewer. He selected the elements and arranged them to his taste. For example, in his most popular series, *Thirty-six Views of Fuji* (later extended to forty-six), he ordered Fuji-san about his woodblock as a true artist should, requiring the mountain to stand now here, now there, until the resulting picture was to his taste. I have studied Fuji from many of the vantage points used by Hokusai, and I have never seen the mountain as he saw it; but when, far from Japan, I try to recall what Fuji looks like, I invariably see it as a Hokusai print.

Hokusai's gift for rearranging nature is especially evident in his three fine series mentioned earlier—the *Bridges*, the *Waterfalls*, and the *Views of the Ryukyus*—for here he not only organizes nature as it ought to be or-



ganized in a poetic portrait; he also portrays the individual components as he thinks they should have been. This is the function of the landscapist—second in importance only to the capacity to synthesize the inner spirit of nature—and it is here that Hokusai shows to greatest advantage.

In the sketches that follow, one can see the powerful mind already at work, for these sketches are highly selective, ruthlessly organized, and artistically arranged. No Hokusai landscape ever happens accidentally. It is composed by a master mind and portrayed by a great draftsman. Where, as in the finished prints, color is added, it is such color as will augment Hokusai's private vision. In other words, the artist is using nature as it should be used.

If Hokusai is not dominated by the over-all formations of nature, neither is he controlled by any of the individual components. We have seen earlier that his vision of birds and animals was highly individualized and that his classical understanding of bamboo and branch was not allowed to dominate his personal comprehension of growing things. Now it is necessary to ascertain how he reacted to the other forms of nature, where the canons of art had not crystalized observation into acceptable and unacceptable forms.

He struggled all his life with the manifestations of water, and in one of his culminating masterpieces, "The Great Wave off Kanagawa," evoked the sea—in a highly specialized vision—as few men have ever been able to do. Similarly, after years of comparative study, much of it dull and inaccurate, he finally achieved in his print of Li Po gazing at the waterfall (from his series the *Imagery of the Poets*) an unsurpassed evocation of water dropping in a curved arch from a great height. On the other hand, despite endless attempts, he never successfully portrayed a waterfall tumbling down over rocks, and his *Manga* example is only slightly more grotesque than those which occur in his prints.

Hokusai was particularly gifted in portraying rain, as one small sample contained in this section shows. When coupled with the example from the section on Flora, it proves thoroughly that the satisfying conventions for indicating rain which we commonly ascribe to Hiroshige and which have become that artist's hallmark were indeed the much earlier handiwork of Hokusai. And, of course, Sukenobu used the same convention earlier than



either Hiroshige or Hokusai. A second characteristic of Hiroshige's, his superb utilization of white paper to indicate snow, was also foreshadowed by Hokusai, as can be seen in these pages, though not with the startling control and success achieved by Hiroshige.

I have never felt that Hokusai, one of the world's superb landscapists, loved nature. Certainly he did not find joy in birds or affection in animals. He did not feel that rain or storm or mist were part of him. He looked on nature with a cold eye, a calculating eye, which permitted him to see the wild passion of the world. He never embraced nature to his bosom; he fought it to the death, and to a degree mastered it. That is all that we can ask of an artist. If perchance he should also accidentally stumble upon the very soul of nature, as did Sesshu and Hiroshige, he is incredibly fortunate; but he is not necessarily a greater artist.

Again I must intrude a personal observation. Some time ago I came into possession of complete sets of Hokusai's late color-print landscape series, from the *Views of Fuji* to the *Imagery of the Poets*, and I have had the enjoyable experience of living with these great prints. I cannot recall ever having halted before some sudden landscape to cry: "That's exactly the way Hokusai saw nature!" Yet I have constantly had that experience with Hiroshige prints, for he is an artist like Monet and Cezanne; he helps us blind people to see the world in which we live, and without the aid of such men I am quite satisfied that most of us would never see a landscape. Mist and sunrise, snow and rain upon a bridge—these things are beyond our capacity to visualize until some artist has shown us what they look like. Hiroshige removes from our eyes the film of incomprehension and creates for us a tangible world of beauty.

But when I am alone, looking at no specific landscape but trying in solitude to recall the force of nature, it is invariably Hokusai who is my Cicero. For he has created those stately, classical, all-enduring landscapes of the mind. They have little to do with nature; they are composed of elements found principally in the human soul. I have often thought that Hiroshige would be an ideal illustrator for the nature poems of Catullus or Horace; but only Hokusai could illustrate the sweeping seascapes of Homer.

Plate 74. With these eight small panels we launch our study of Hokusai the formal landscapist, and a better sampling of his attitudes could scarcely have been found. All these scenes were in or near Edo. Reading left to right and top to bottom: 1) The Yoshiwara, the ancient and famous red-light district of Tokyo, outlawed "definitely and finally" on the day this note was being

written. 2) Tomigaoka, with its famous Hachiman Shrine in central Edo. 3) Gyoroku, in Chiba Prefecture. 4) Kinryusan, the famous Kannon shrine in Asakusa, now rebuilt of reinforced concrete. 5) Tsukuda Isle, site of a fishing village near Tokyo. 6) The Anamori Inari Shrine at Haneda, location of Tokyo's modern International Airport. 7) The Myojin Shrine in Kanda, still standing

in the heart of Tokyo's book district, scene of one of Edo's most popular religious festivals. 8) Azabu, now Tokyo's embassy district, probably showing the famous temple Zenfuku-ji, which Townsend Harris occupied in 1859 and where he raised the first American flag seen in Tokyo.

吉原



富ヶ岡



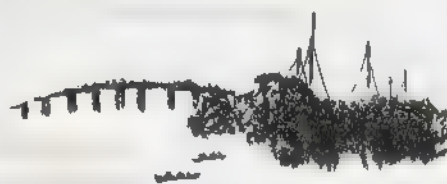
行徳



金竜山



佃島



羽振田



神田



麻布



Plate 75. This page, dated 1815, contains almost the essence of Japanese landscape. The vignettes have an almost haunting quality for anyone acquainted with landscapes in Japanese art. The simple fence enclosing a well-sweep, the flowering tree leaning against its landscape, the geese descending upon some rushland, the solitary rocks rising from the sea, and the curious two-

wheeled cart that appears in so many Japanese paintings—these bespeak Japan. Rarely have they been drawn with such random, yet powerful, ability to evoke memories. And, of course, the view of Fuji, as well as the half-moon bridge, occur so often in Japanese art that any landscapist had to be proficient in drawing them



Plate 76. More components to be used in landscapes. In fact, the long narrow shallow-bottomed boat, mid-right, will be used with admirable effect many times by Hokusai, particularly in his "Sunset over Ryogoku Bridge" from the *Views of Fuji*, where the undulant form of the boat is used to counterpoise the arch of the bridge, a print which has been called "one of the high

marks of Japanese landscape painting. (See Plate 14 in *Hokusai*, Vol. 1 of *Library of Japanese Art*, Tuttle, 1955.) The ship upper center is one of the *higaki-bune*, diamond-shaped ships, which carried merchandise from Osaka to Edo, the diamond pattern being formed by bamboo fences erected to keep the cargo in place.

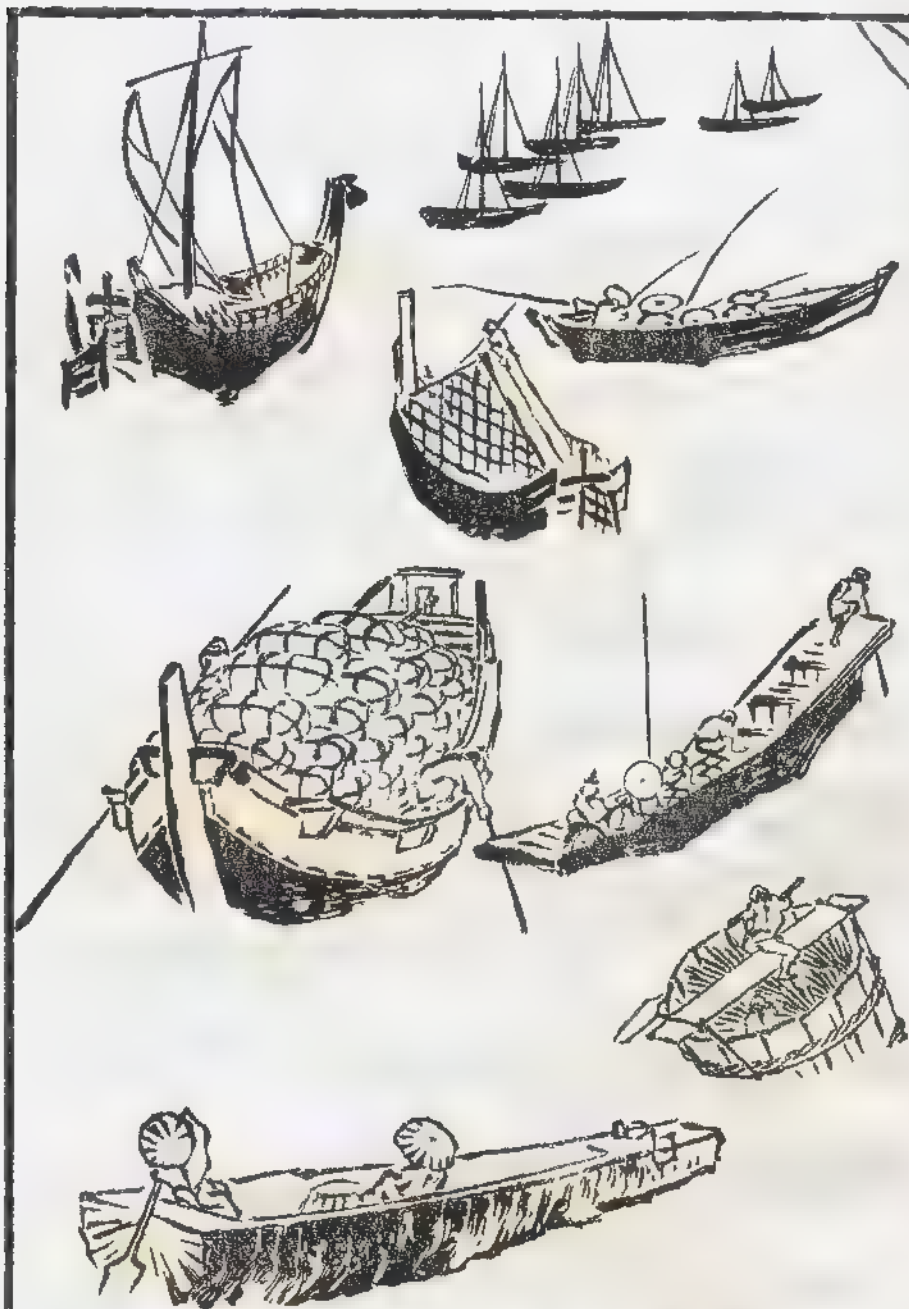


Plate 77. In a nation where a man about to build a house will first go to a rock merchant to find the two or three special rocks around which he plans to create his garden, because without a garden there would be no purpose in building a house and without good rocks no one would want a garden—in such a land artists study carefully the structure of individual rocks, which are

held to have a beauty much more considerable than things which the West prizes such as flowers, sunsets, and trees. But even if I take into consideration the fact that Hokusai drew these sketches against just such a regard for rocks, I still find this study of nine prize specimens dull and poorly drawn. I am told that a Japanese would not agree.



Plate 78. Patiently, Hokusai builds up his landscape components. Here he concentrates on waterfalls and cascades, a subject which preoccupied him for several decades. One pair of diagonal scenes shows water falling precipitously; whereas the other pair illustrates a more gradual drop. Not one of the sketches is particularly good, but the lower-right one has always

seemed unusually maladroit to me. It purports to show how water cascades down a steep, rocky fall, being tossed aloft on impact with the larger rocks.

This unsuccessful sketch, dated 1814, must have tormented Hokusai for many years. He returned to the subject many times, and then, in the *Waterfalls* series of about 1829, he tried again

in "Kirifuri Falls," a color print which some critics like a good deal more than I do. (See Plates 17-18 in Hokusai, Vol. 1 of Library of Japanese Art, Tuttle, 1955.)



Plate 79. This sketch illustrates both Hokusai's study of waves and one of the popular legends from which wood-block artists constructed a number of memorable prints, the greatest being Kuniyoshi's study of Taira ghosts attacking Yoshitsune and Benkei in their boat. Our sketch is captioned "Ship Ghosts," referring to the spirits of drowned sailors, who cast spells on the living,

moaning for fresh water to quench their thirst. If an unwary sailor offered them any, they promptly splashed the water, in endless supply, back into the ship, sinking it. For this reason sea-ghosts were always given drinks from ladles with no bottoms, which saved both the ship and the supply of fresh water.

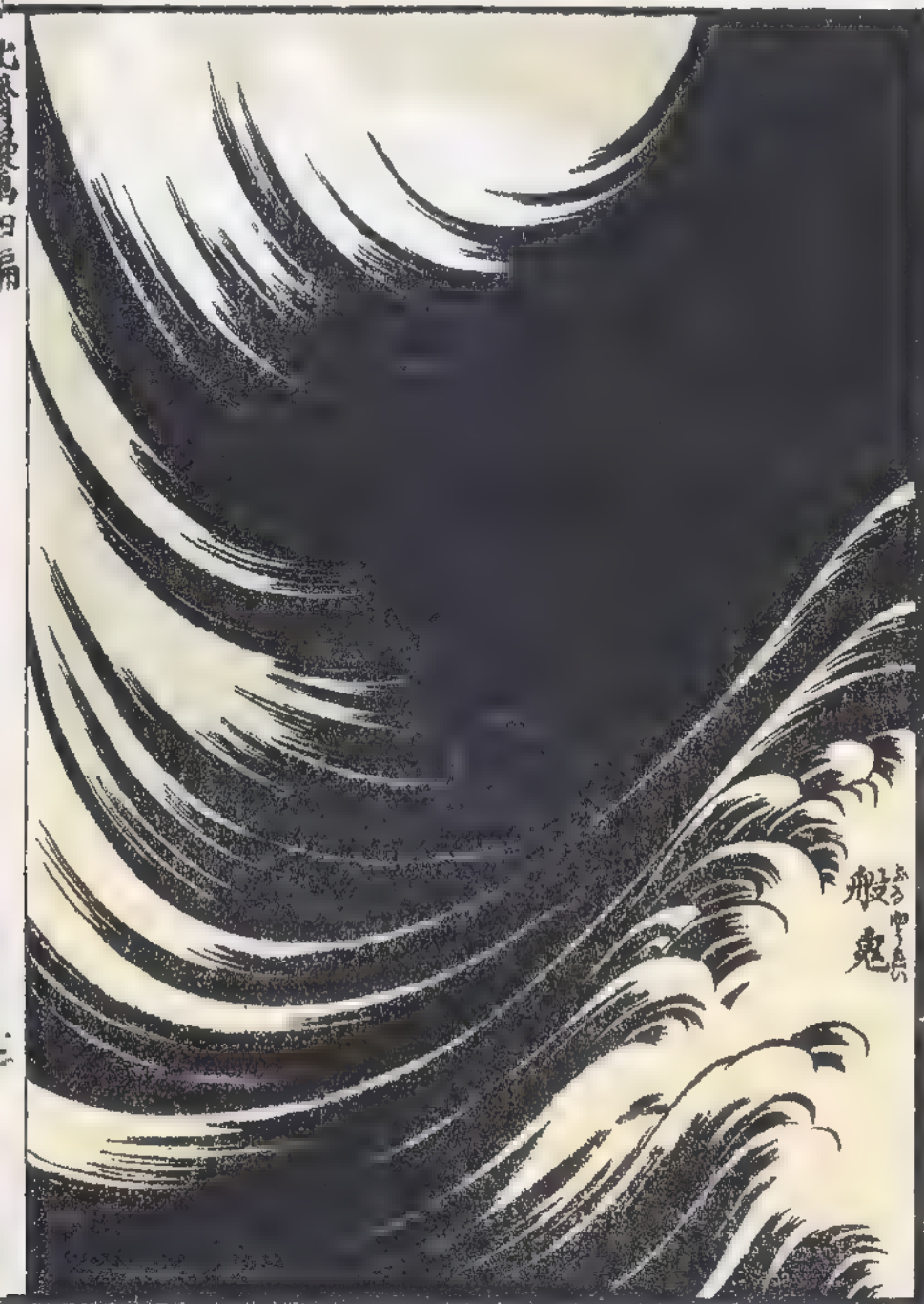
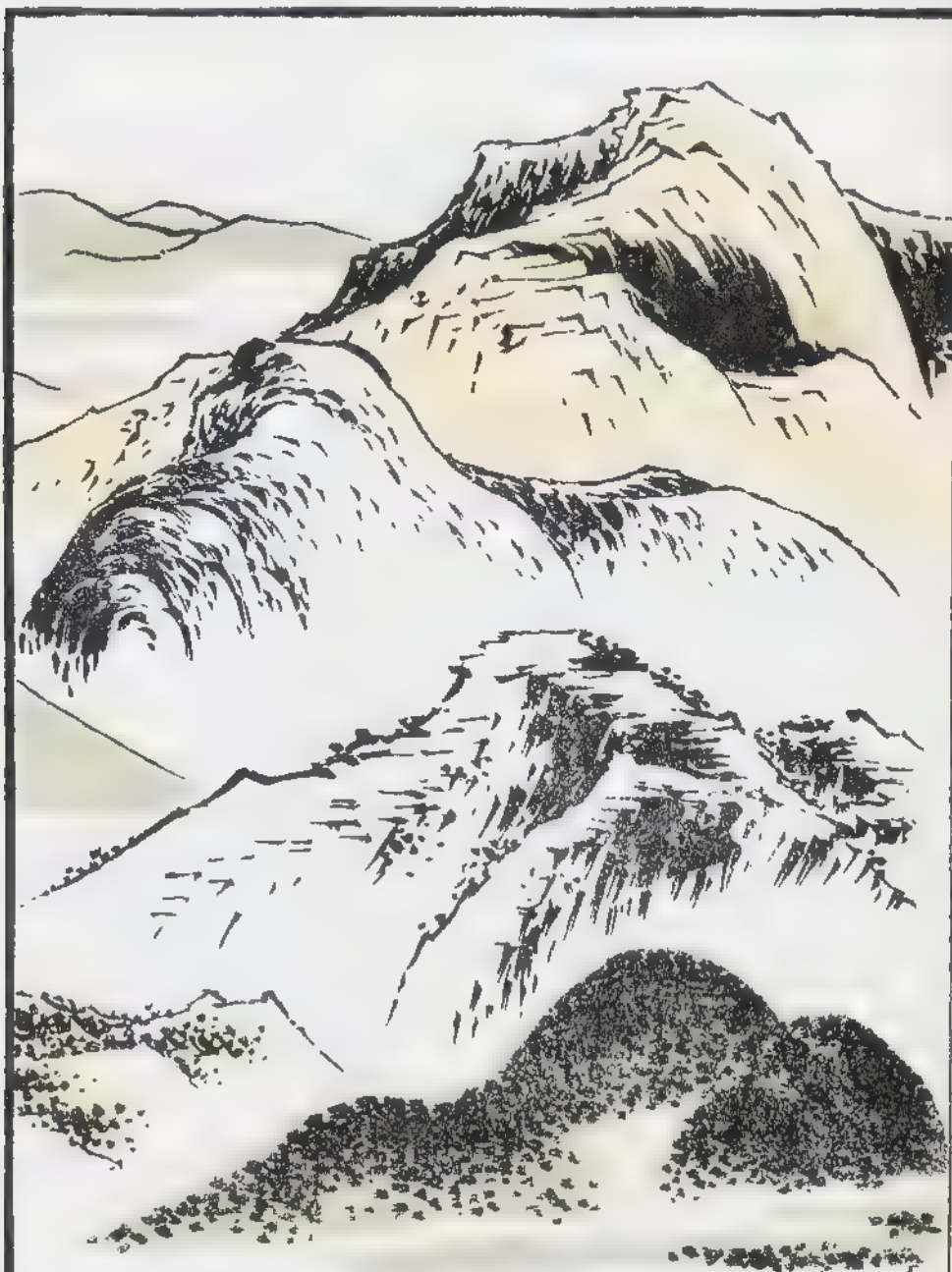


Plate 80. Having analyzed waterfalls and then waves, Hokusai now moves from rocks to mountains, and here, I think, he demonstrates the power of his brush. This sketch, from Volume I, is the freest in that otherwise rather stiff and formulaic collection. These are not Chinese mountains; this is not Chinese art; for although Hokusai will return to that tradition for the creation of

some of his greatest landscape color prints, here he is a Japanese peasant looking at the convolutions of his own mountains. Starting with tree-covered slopes, he progresses to higher, partially covered hills and on to high, rocky mountains. It is interesting to note the parallel fingers of cloud upper left; these are a tradition of classical Japanese landscape art.



北斎漫画四巻

四

Plates 81-82. This contrasting representation of the ocean has been greatly admired by artists and writers alike, but it gives rise to jaundiced speculation about the entire business of trying to explain or comment upon art in words:

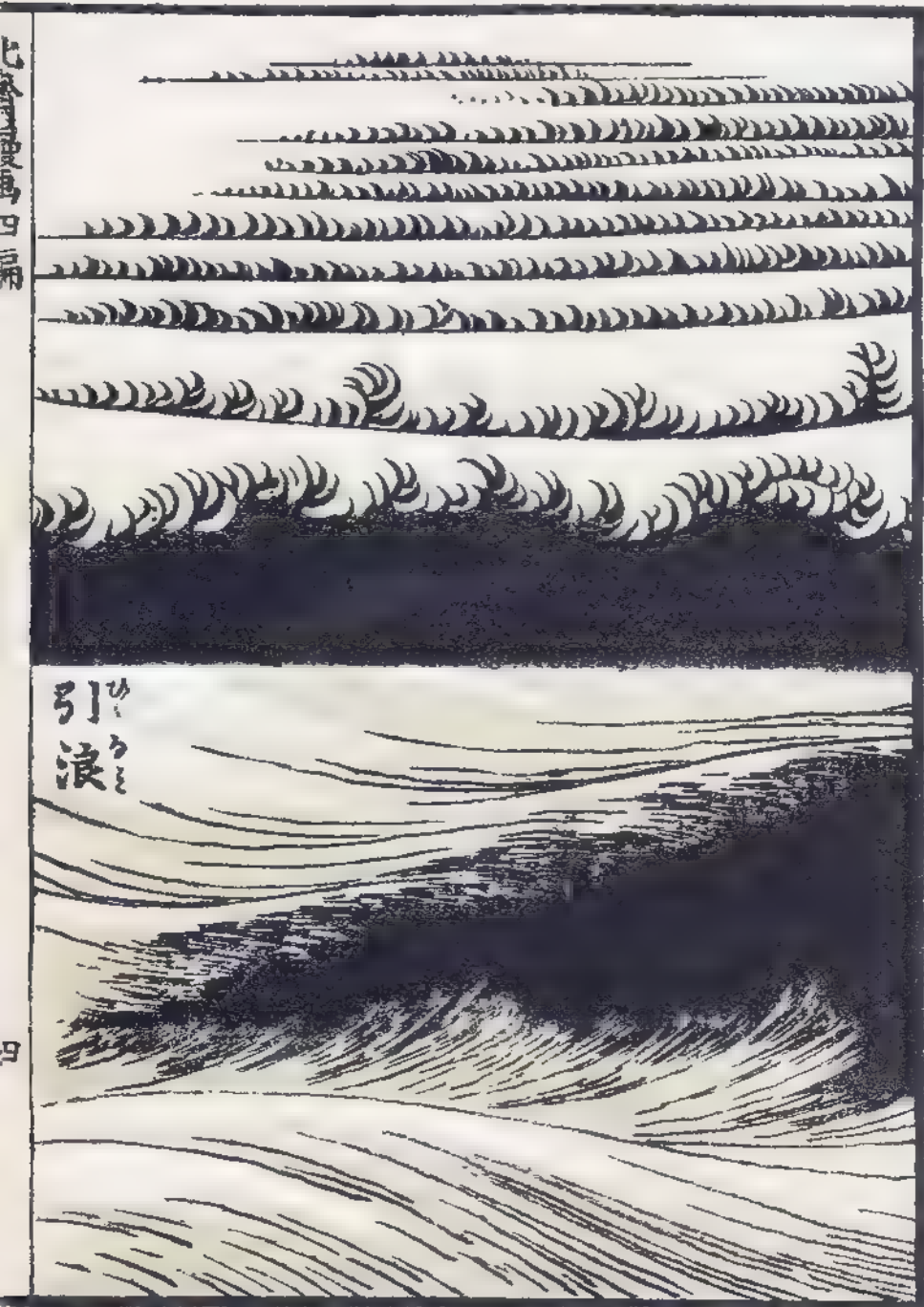
C. J. Holmes termed this drawing "a magnificent plate of a breaking wave." Later he described it as "a double-page

study of the sea: the crawling foam that creeps over the sand fold upon fold, and below, the dark hollow of a great wave just about to break. Their juxtaposition is so ingeniously contrived that the extent, the flatness, and the complex folds of the foam enhance by contrast the massive sweep of the billow beneath."

These are good words and would doubtless have pleased

Hokusai, but unfortunately he had already captioned the two halves of his sketch. The upper reads "Advancing Waves" (*yo-suru nami*), the lower, "Retreating Waves" (*hiku nami*). In other words, the sea in the lower half is doing exactly the opposite of what Holmes imagined; it is going out rather than coming in.

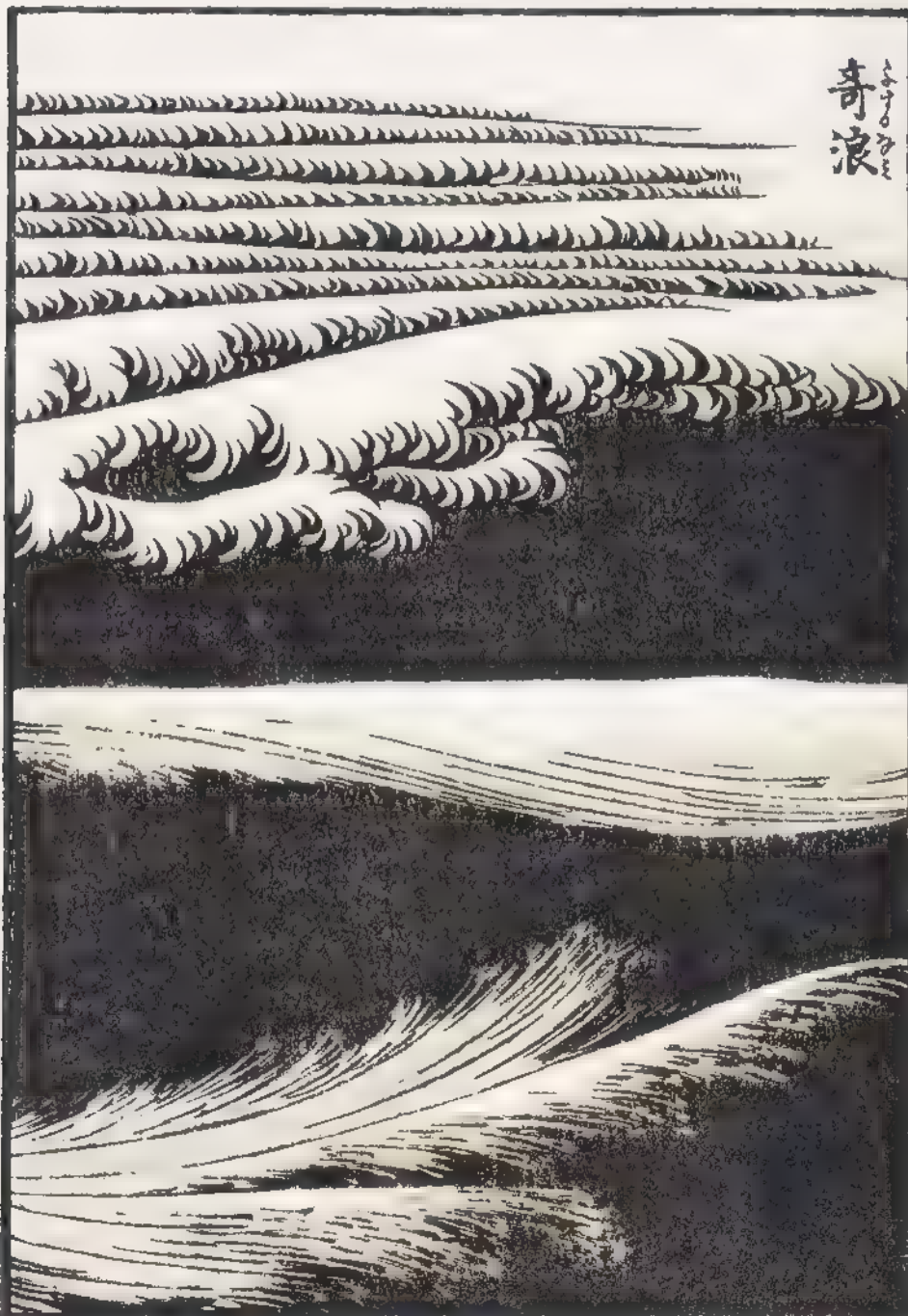
The present annotator does not imagine for a moment that



he himself has escaped such pitfalls, but he nevertheless feels that words must sometimes be used, however ineptly, if one wants to share with another the joy he finds in art. My love of the *Manga* started years ago when I first read Holmes. It is my hope that I may introduce these volumes to others. And regardless of titles, I agree with Holmes that this drawing is a thing of strong

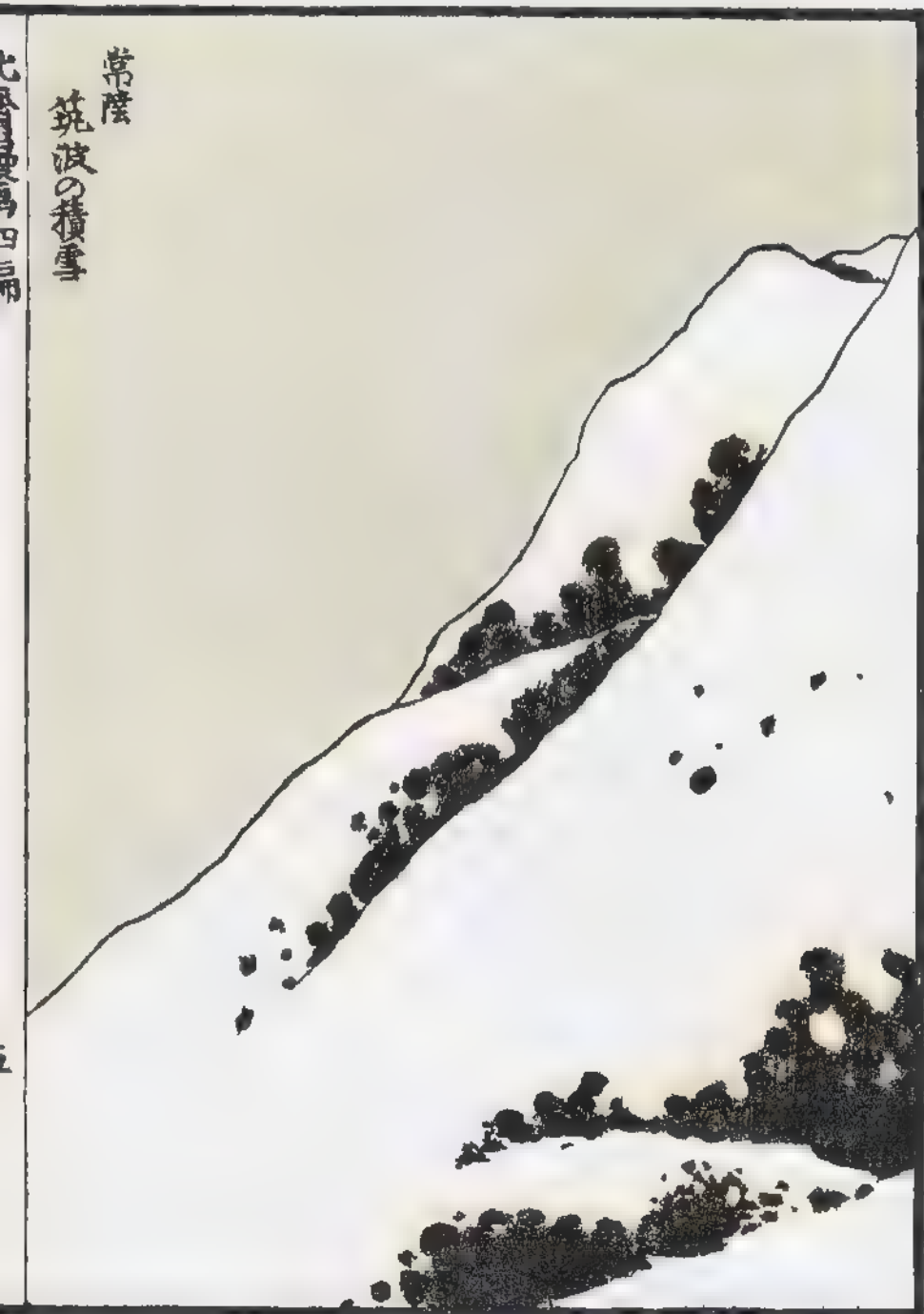
and lasting beauty.

Doubtless, only a Japanese student, and only one deeply versed in the traditions of his country and the times of Hokusai, could ever hope to identify and explain all the subjects depicted in the *Manga*. Surprisingly enough, no one has yet made the attempt. So until that time, Holmes and I must limp along, admiringly, as best we can



Plates 83-84. Along with the sea comes the mountain. Hokusai filled this somber drawing "Snow of Mount Tsukuba, Hitachi [now Ibaragi]." This demonstrates the ultimate in showing massed trees by the simplest artistic means. In many ways this use of snow to indicate a mountain's weight and form anticipates the excellent work of Hiroshige in such prints as his "Mount Hira in Snow,"

from the famous *Omī Hakkei* series. Hokusai's drawing appeared in the *Manga* in 1817. Hiroshige's finished print about 1835.





Plates 85-86. Two delightful landscapes demonstrating the joy with which Hokusai worked. I fail to see how anyone could study the upper sketch without catching the springtime rhythm of the old man's spirit, or the bottom one without sensing the calm that possessed him even in his most turbulent years. When these singing, joyous things were drawn, he was experiencing

some of the major disappointments of his life and had accomplished none of the great prints for which we remember him. Of all Hokusai's birds, I like these crazy little vagrants best. Of his dead trees sending out one last surge of blossoms, this extraordinary tree is most memorable. Of his snow scenes, this is the simplest. Of the lyric voices that sang in this mad old man's heart, this

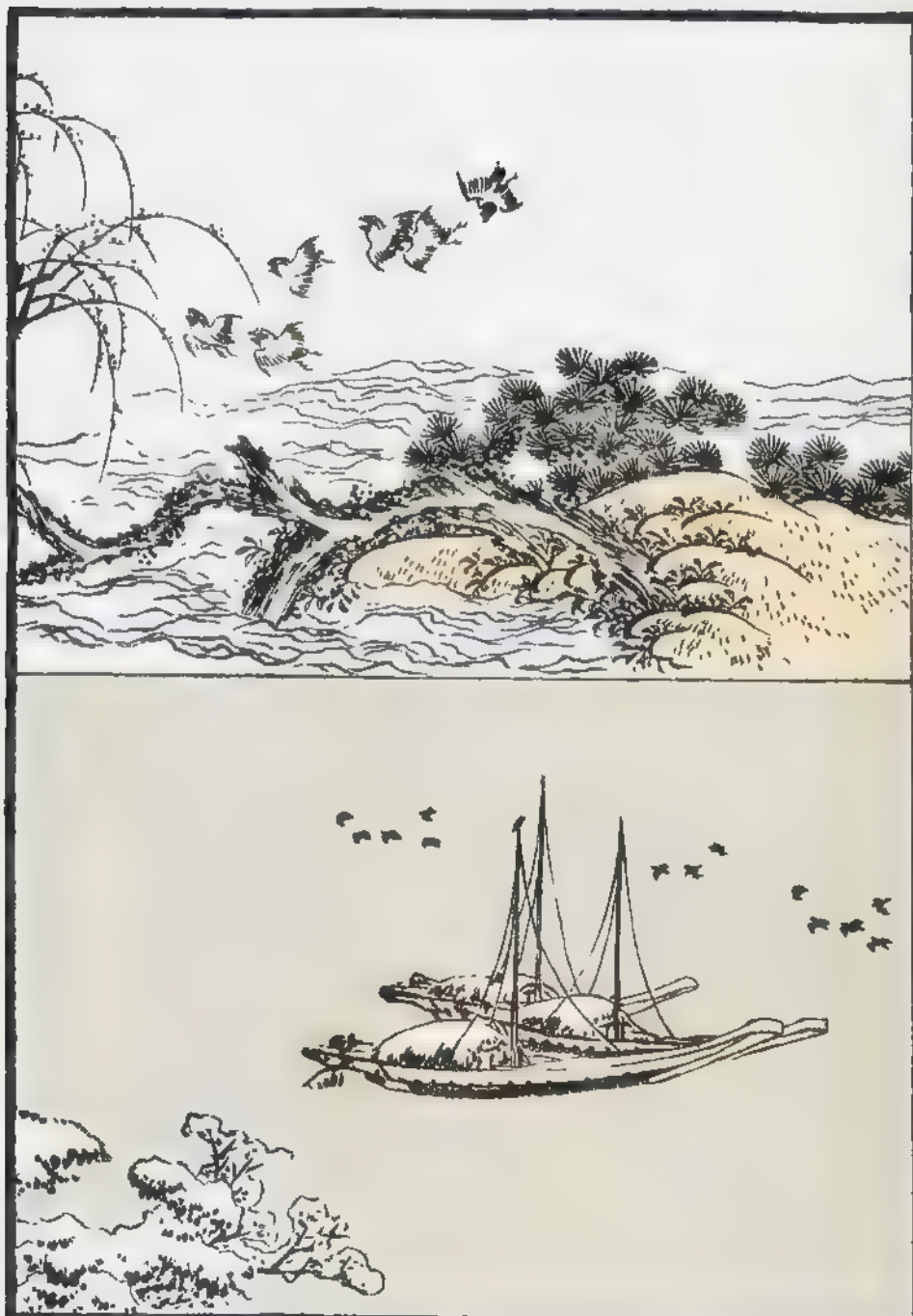
unpretentious page tells me most.

The drawing of both the birds in the upper sketch and the human figures in the lower are squarely in the Japanese tradition. Decorative motifs of just such flights of birds are to be seen every hand—flying across the covers of a Noh text published by the famous Kanze school of Noh chanting, or as skillful cutouts in a



panel of beautifully grained, unpainted wood that serves as the transom between two rooms of an elegantly appointed inn. As for the human figures, how many times have country people been shown in just this way, with nothing visible but their large hats, straw raincoats, and matchstick legs; in fact, this conceit was utilized so frequently by other woodblock artists as to

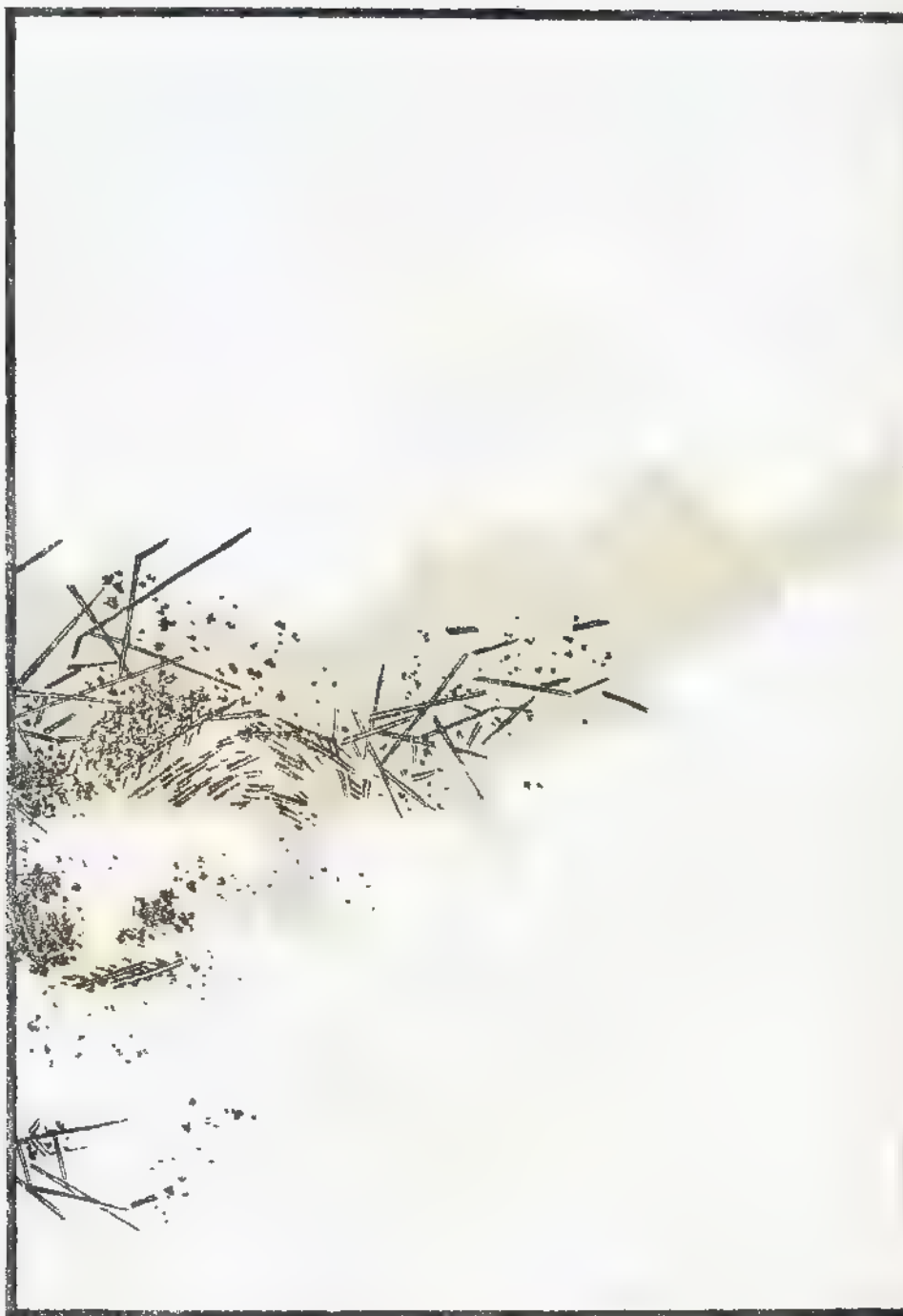
constitute a cliché. And yet here Hokusai manages to use such conventional subjects to achieve effects purely – and delightfully – his own.



Plates 87-88. Hokusai was of course interested in the demonic forces of nature as they might affect landscape, and here he shows how a typhoon can destroy a house. In the left plate the drawing of the upward-rising clouds, contrasted with the gray of the sullen sky, is masterful, while the compression of focus in an impressionistic manner is high art.

ついでに

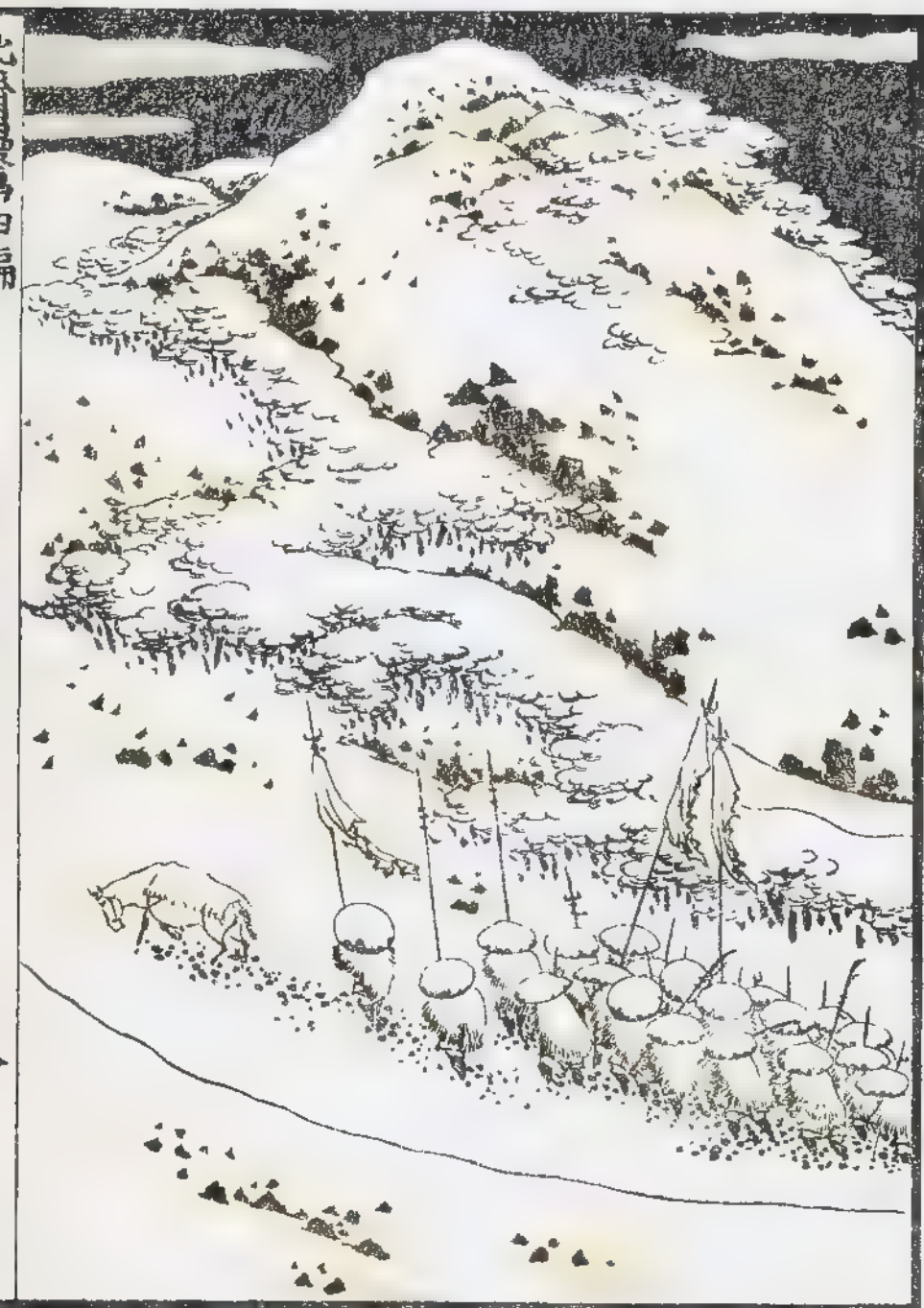




Plates 89-90. Emperor Huan of Ch'i was the most celebrated ruler in China's troubled 7th century B.C. Before he died in 643, he engaged in numerous battles and campaigns, one of which is pictured here. The caption reads: "Kanko [the Japanese rendering of 'Emperor Huan'] returning his army home, following the lead of an old horse." The sketch represents an admirable

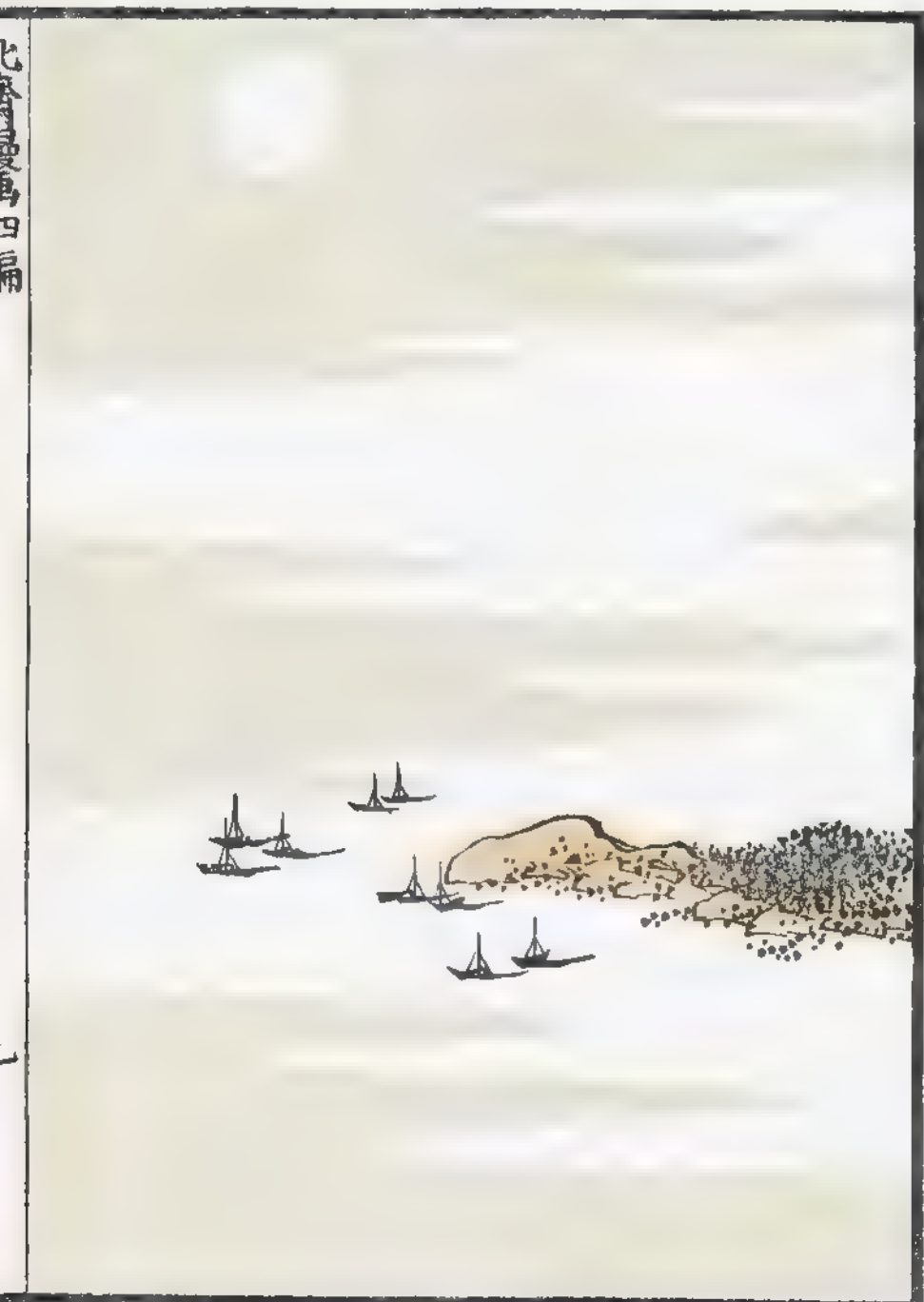
blending of human and natural elements in landscape.

What was the role of the lone horse in the story Hokusai is here retelling? We do not know. But the sheer dramatic force with which the animal is drawn provides an effective spur to the viewer's imagination.





Plates 91-92. "Under the Moon," Hokusai calls this sketch. In it we can see how carefully he studied the relationships between masses of land and tranquility of water. In this respect it evokes memories of the famous landscape series of color prints, but since it was not published until about 1875, long after these series had appeared, its relation to them is uncertain

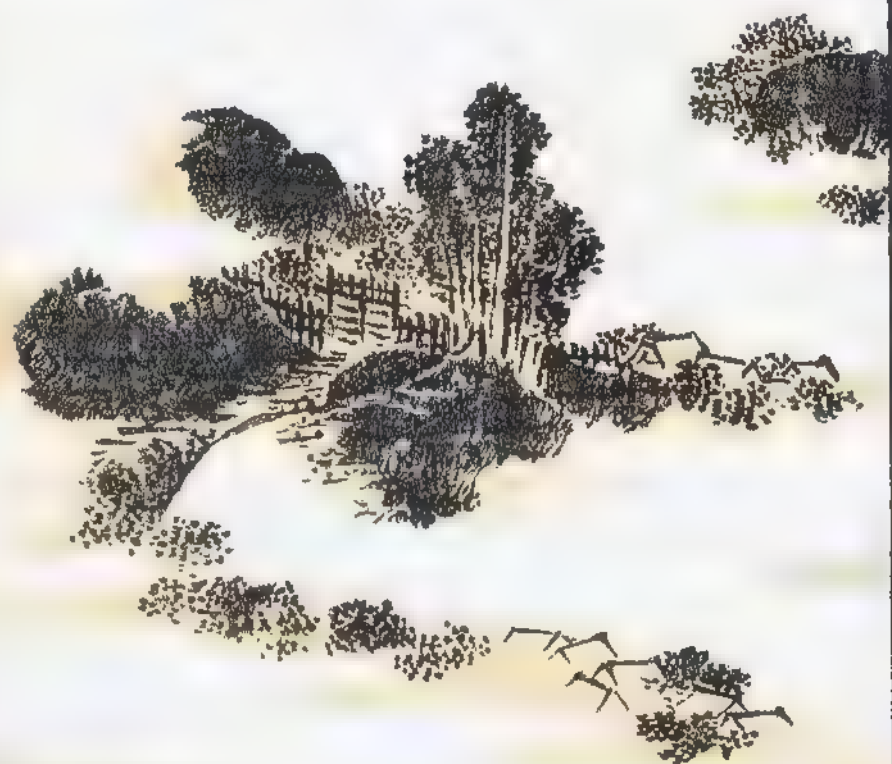


月下



Plates 93-94. Captioned "Kasumi-ga-Seki, Musashi," this sketch shows a section of old Edo, just outside the central castle-fortress, where the nobility maintained large estates; in Tokyo today this area, still called by the same name, is comparable to Washington's Mall, being lined by government ministries. The name means "Barrier of Mist," and it is evident that Hokusai had this

fact in mind when drawing this sketch. Once more the artistic means by which the effect is obtained is both simple and impressionistic.

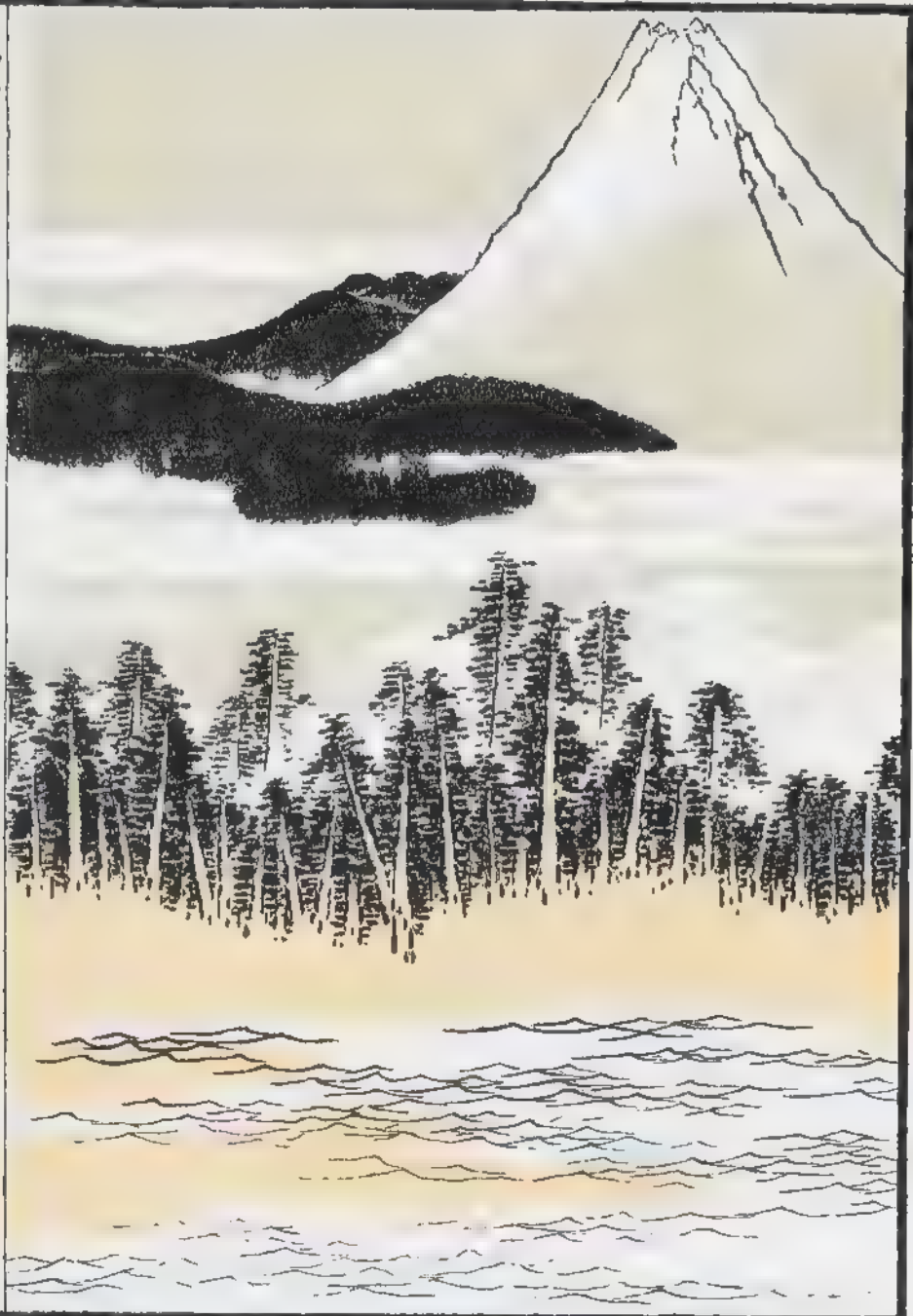


武州
霞ヶ関



Plates 95-96. Any anthology of Hokusai's work would be incomplete if it lacked at least one strong representation of Fuji-san. The view seen here may have been taken from Japan's most spectacular vantage point for viewing the slim rise of Fuji Miho Beach, in Shizuoka Prefecture, where a narrow spit of land crowded with gnarled pine trees creeps out to sea

as if for the express purpose of providing an unparalleled view of the mountain. This presentation, the first in the *Manga*, is more cramped in style than that used in either the drawing book *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji* or the print series *Thirty-six Views of Fuji*. It is disappointing, so far as I am concerned, for it fails to catch the grandeur of the mountain.



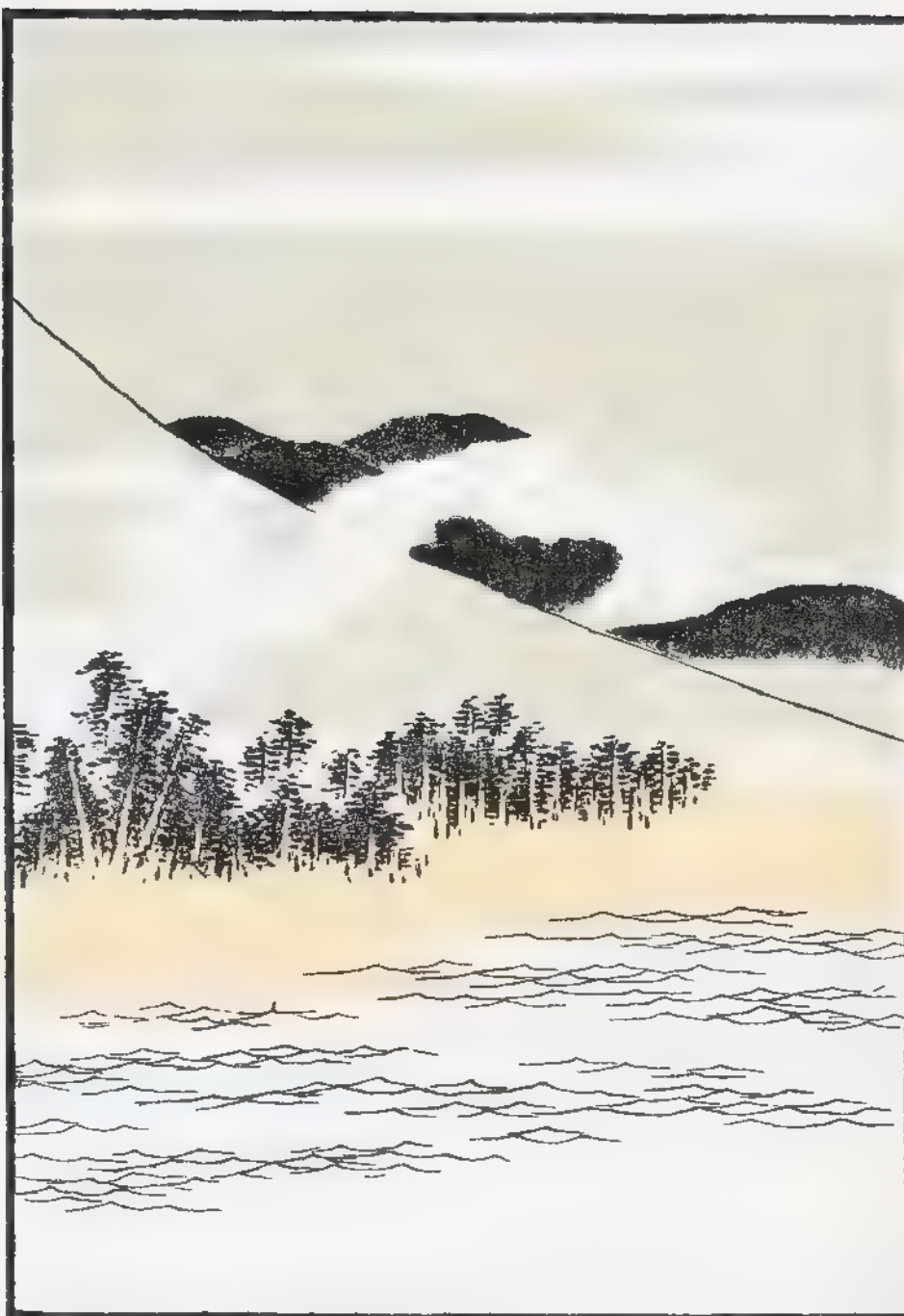


Plate 97. We end our selection of Hokusai's landscape studies with one which presents human beings against a natural setting, in the style which characterized his greatest work. In many respects this sketch of Hashirimizu, in Sagami Province, today's Kanagawa Prefecture, is as typical a Hokusai landscape sketch as one could find. The men are of about the size that Hokusai

used in his most successful prints and stand in the same relationship to their landscape background. Chiba Prefecture looms in the distance across Tokyo Bay, and the house corresponds to many he used in similar settings. For although Hokusai did compose some sterling landscapes in which people and their works are totally absent, the majority of his prints use workmen to give

significance to what would otherwise be impersonal nature. This sketch also provides an excellent example of Hokusai's use of perspective.



相模
走水

THE PAST

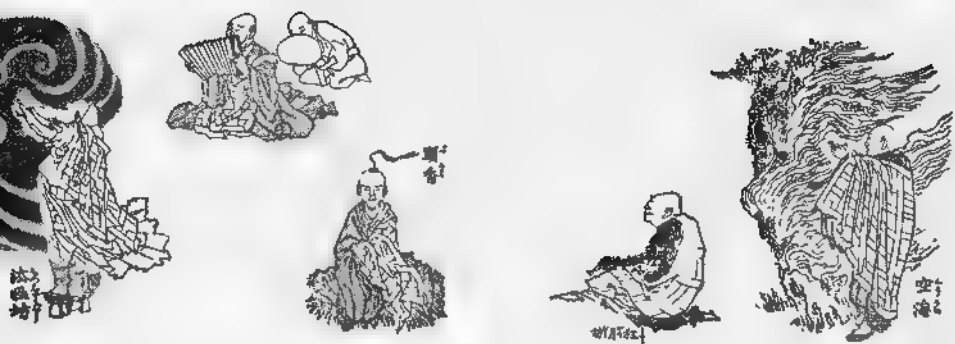


IF THE sketches of the Manga are separated into the categories selected for this book, the largest category concerns incidents and characters from the past, and in studying this, one quickly becomes aware that the subjects can be divided into two groups: those that present historical human beings who at one time lived in either China or Japan, and those that depict mythological beings who inhabited the upper air of these societies.

From the time this anthology was projected, it was intended to divide this section into those two broad classifications: historical and mythological. But I had worked on the division only briefly before discovering that it was impossible to adhere to these classifications. Repeatedly Hokusai deals with mythological beings as if they were real humans and with men whom we have reason to suppose lived as if they were mythological. In fact, in Hokusai truth and fancy are so delicately intertwined as to raise several problems.

As a result of trying to decide whether Hokusai was accepting fact or fiction as the basis for certain sketches, I have come to the conviction that the great old man believed in ghosts, and that they were as real to him as the people among whom he lived. I am not referring to his obvious belief in the grotesque, which will be dealt with later, but rather to his acceptance of the vivid, persuasive, and religion-based mythology that has always been popular in Japan. I invite the reader to study the drawings which follow and to isolate those which are clearly fact from those in which fantasy plays a detectable role. Quickly the lines become confused. In this respect Hokusai's work faithfully represents the subtle balance which his nation and his people have always maintained between history and religious mythology.

At first glance it would appear that the Japanese of Hokusai's time lived in a well-defined tripartite world. There was immediately about him, although certainly not of foremost importance, the real world in which men in the historical past had accomplished certain known things, which, in prosaic nations like Germany or England would have been recorded in what we know as history rather than in sketchbooks. Japan was exceptionally rich in accumulated historical incident, the struggles between ancient houses having provided many fascinating episodes, while the uneasy balance maintained between emperor, shogun, and priestly warrior, oftentimes focused



on economic problems, offered the kind of involved history so common in the national records of France, Italy, and Spain. Thus Japanese history, as viewed from Hokusai's time, was rich in both personal exploit and in profound major developments, and no nation that has ever existed has had a more passionate dedication to its history than has Japan. Here was a subject ready-made for Hokusai's brush and temperament.

The second dominion within which the Japanese lived was the sweet, reasonable world of Buddhism. This gentle religion originated in India and for a brief moment seemed destined to become the dominant faith of that vast subcontinent, but Buddha's teaching had no chance of standing up against the persuasive and permeating influence of Hinduism, a much more strongly founded faith. Therefore, what some have called India's greatest contribution to mankind was ousted from the homeland and forced to seek refuge and roots elsewhere. Some branches of Buddhism found vitality in Burma, Ceylon, and Siam, but one of the strongest offshoots moved westward into Afghanistan, then into Tibet and on into China, whence vigorous tendrils probed on into the Korean peninsula opposite Japan, which had so far developed no satisfactory formalized religion of its own.

Belatedly, contacts with China and Korea brought the Japanese into contact with Buddhism, and it is to their credit that almost at once the leaders of Japan recognized that here they had found a spiritual force well adapted to the needs of their own country. Accordingly, missionaries were invited to Japan, the religion was expounded throughout court circles, and the imperial leaders decided, almost as an act of intellectual determination, to adopt Buddhism. When they had done so, they found that they had acquired as well a rich panoply of legend, plus an excellent pantheon of Indian and Chinese gods readily adaptable to the Japanese personality. These were quickly given Japanese names and attributes and identified with native deities, and one of the most pleasant rewards of perusing Hokusai's *Manga* is to discover here the gods one has known in Ceylon or Cambodia decked out in new finery and known by new names, but performing the old functions established by Indian Buddhism.

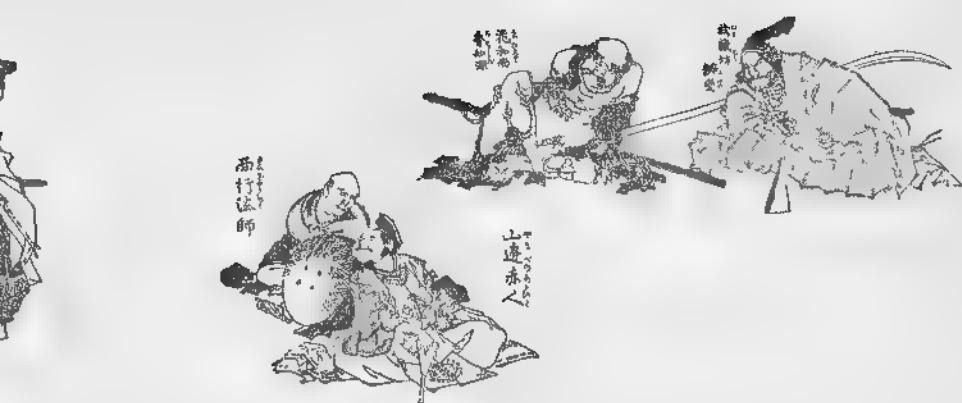
In Hokusai's day these gods still retained their original force, and there



can be little doubt but that to him they had a corporeal existence, somewhere just beyond the world of immediate sensory perception. They governed life, held evil spirits in check, defended a man, his family, and his nation, and distributed rewards and punishments. Although not formally a religious man, Hokusai was deeply involved in this Buddhist world and appears to have accepted its mythology. Even his frequent ridicule of Buddhism's sometimes preposterous proliferation of worldly monks was never as savage as that offered by some of his contemporaries.

The third dominion within which Hokusai operated was the Shinto faith, the primordial and only partially formulated national religion of Japan. Founded upon shamanistic rituals probably brought over from Siberia during the very earliest days of Japanese settlement, Shinto developed into a body of animistic and pantheistic belief for which the Western student can find no ready parallel within his own experience. The most meaningful explanation I have ever heard—and one which I instinctively accept as reasonable either for Japan or America—came from an exasperated Shinto leader who had tried vainly to elucidate the mysteries for me. Finally he cried: "Forget Japan. Think only of America. What spiritual resources keep you going? Not Christianity—which is comparable to our Buddhism—for that is an international religion and applies alike to all men. What is there in the essential American mind that accomplishes this task? I will suggest certain things. Do you not somehow feel that Arlington Cemetery, where your national heroes are buried, has some extra-sacred aspects? In Shinto we feel the same way, but we specifically state that some of the gods of our nation reside in such places. Do you not revere, in some special way, George Washington? In Shinto we postulate such men as gods. Does your heart not beat a little faster at the mention of Concord Bridge? In Shinto such a bridge obviously has a god residing in it. Why do your people have a special affection for Pike's Peak? In Shinto we explain popular adoption by saying that a god resides there. And how can you explain the extraordinary hold a popular hero like Babe Ruth exerts long after his death? In Shinto we explain it easily.

"If you add together all the things I've been talking about," my Shintoist



summarized, "you have a system which we in Japan call Shinto—the accumulation of national spirits. In your country you call it more vaguely the American Way of Life, but you mean the same thing."

Again, Hokusai gives every evidence of accepting totally and without conflict the Shintoist faith. One of the reasons why he saw landscape as a particularist was that he accorded to each component its individual spirit. Thus, if he found an especially fine rock, it meant that some god, seeking habitation, had taken residence there. A pine tree of unusually noble stature enjoyed the same distinction. Therefore, to subdue these diverse elements into a Monet-style landscape would for Hokusai have been impossible; and his faith persists even today, for the Westerner who wanders through any modern Japanese city often comes upon, in the busiest and most unlikely places, small shrines hewn into sides of buildings or intruding upon public footpaths, preserved through the years because the builder recognized in a particular rock of noble configuration both a thing of beauty and the habitation of a god.

Hokusai, therefore, operated within three worlds: the real, the Buddhist, and the Shintoist. Had he kept them severally isolated, the organization of this present section would be a simple task. One would start with sketches representing the most ancient Shinto beliefs, dating far back into the cold days of the race, then move into the world of the imported Indian and Chinese Buddhist deities, and end with the historical men of Japan and their heroic deeds.

The difficulty is that Hokusai mixed his three worlds hopelessly, in much the same way that the average contemporary Japanese can accept wholeheartedly and with no confusion or embarrassment both Buddhism and Shintoism—and oftentimes Christianity as well. Consequently, Hokusai constructs a kind of Gargantuan pantheism, in which some of his historic characters are endowed with Buddhist attributes, many of his Buddhist deities with human experiences, and most of his favored Japanese with Shinto immortality. At first this is exasperating to the logical anthologist, but after a few vain attempts to impose Western rationalism upon this melange he begins to respect the vibrant world in which Hokusai operated



and then to envy the extraordinarily rich spiritual experience the old man must have known. To Hokusai, every rock was a temple, every man a god.

It is this rich confusion of religion, myth, and history that unfolds in the following pages, and if today's Western reader studies the *Manga* primarily for an insight into Hokusai's principles of landscape, or for an appreciation of his attitudes toward art in general, he misses the flavor of Hokusai, for we can be sure that when the *Manga* was first published, Hokusai's readers were divided into two unequal segments: a few who studied the drawings for their artistic content, and the many who read the books almost as novels, poring principally over sketches of the type that follows. It was these particular drawings that accounted for the large sales and the continuing popularity of the *Manga*.

Artistically, the sketches in this category seem to me less rewarding than those in any other. The drawing is apt to be bombastic, the observation hackneyed, and the total impact tedious; and although Hokusai's work in this genre has occasionally been praised by critics of perception, I remain unable to understand why.

Specifically, the later Utagawa artists who ruined woodblock prints by their blizzard of bombastic historic triptychs—those useless, wasteful excrescences—borrowed many of their ideas and much of their style from the *Manga*. I have never felt that an early artist ought to be held responsible for the manner in which later followers debase his precepts, and certainly Hokusai cannot be blamed for Utagawa excesses; but on the other hand, when one sees the degeneration of Utagawa work he is reminded of the fact that it stemmed directly from the inherent weakness in Hokusai's historical drawings. Even if no Utagawa artist had deteriorated what Hokusai began, I think that many critics would nevertheless find the *Manga* historical pages artistically tedious; but having seen what they could degenerate into, one finds the bombast, the heavy drawing, the stodgy inspiration, and the rococo brushwork almost distasteful.

The pages are saved, however, by their robust vitality and by the obvious affection with which they were composed. Better than any other, they lead us into Hokusai's peculiar world, and for that reason we appreciate them.

Plate 98. With this sketch we plunge into the weird and wonderful world of Hokusai's history-region-mythology-demonology. No more appropriate introductory drawing could be found than this, for it illustrates a religious ceremony in which Hokusai must have believed, as do many Japanese today. This is the "casting out of evil" practiced at *Setsubun*, the

Spring Equinox, at which time dried beans are cast toward the four corners of a room, accompanied by some such incantation as "Let good in, cast evil out." Here the ceremony is performed, against a background of Shinto symbols, by a fierce samurai, while another character plays the role of Evil. It is also performed, in a much simpler fashion, and usually with the spirit of Evil

being left to the imagination, in private homes. I myself have thrown the *Setsubun* beans - with very satisfactory results.

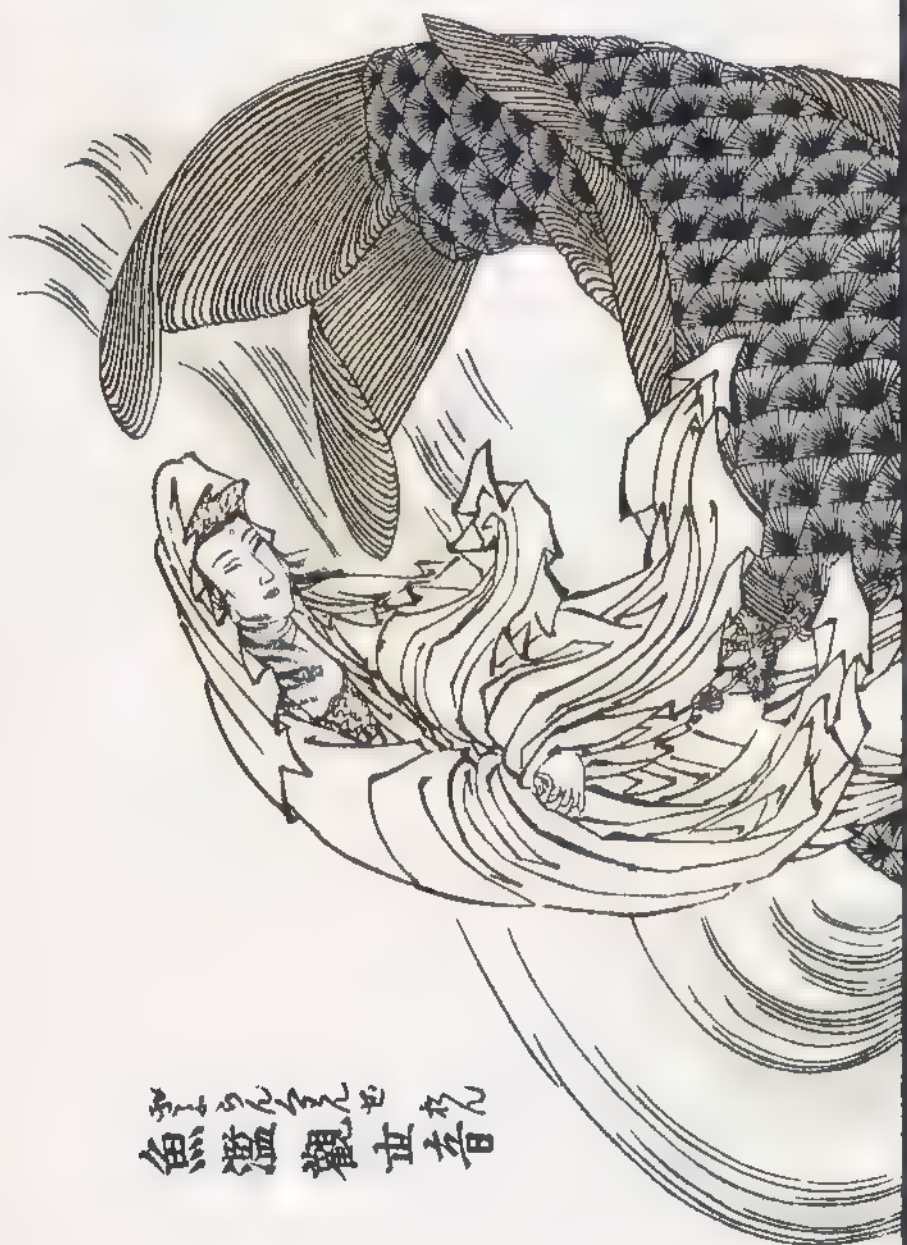


北齋浮世草子

Plates 99-100. This fine "swinging" picture of one of Northern Buddhism's most loved deities, Kannon, often called the Goddess of Mercy, is one of Hokusai's more successful historical drawings. As indicated by both the caption, "Gyoran Kanzeon," and the iconography, the goddess is seen here in one of her 33 manifestations, that of the Bodhisattva of Fish. This particular

bodhisattva, having evidently been conceived in China, is an example of how Indian Buddhism was enriched by its northward travels. According to legend, in the year 818 there was a godless village in Kianghsi Province to which a beautiful maiden came selling fish. Many young men proposed to her, but she announced that she would marry only the one who could recite a certain

sutra by the next morning. Twenty succeeded, and she gave these another sutra to be memorized by the following dawn. Only ten accomplished this, and were set yet another sutra to learn, which only one young man was able to do. The maiden married him, but instantly she was taken ill and died, vanishing completely except for a golden collar-bone, which proved that she



魚籃觀世音
Gyoran Kanzeon

was an incarnation of a bodhisattva, come down to teach the village respect for the sutras. In art she is usually shown riding a golden carp which, as in this sketch, wears flowers in its gills.

With reference to this and the other "swinging" pictures in this anthology, note that, since Japanese and Western books are read from opposite directions, in order to conform

to the common bookmaking tradition of having sideways illustrations run in the same direction as that in which a book is read, it has been necessary to alter the positions of the pages. If the reader will turn this book upside down, he will see this diptych in the position in which it appeared in the original *Manga*.



Plate 101. These are the four great Deva Kings, who protect the world of Buddhism from the attacks of demons, each guarding one of the cardinal directions. Top left: Komoku-ten, which is the Japanese rendering of the original Indian name Virupaksa. Top right: Tamon-ten, or Vaisravana, who is customarily pictured with the spear in his right hand and with a statue of a bodhisattva in-

stead of a pagoda. Bottom left: Zochō-ten, or Virūdhaka. Bottom right: Jikoku-ten, or Dhrtarastra, who should have the sword in his left hand. It was legendary characters like these, imported from India, who added so much richness to Japanese Buddhism, but it must be remembered that in this, as in almost every instance in which the Japanese borrowed cultural items from

abroad, they improved what they borrowed and adapted it to their specific needs. Thus the Japanese abacus is both simpler and faster than the Chinese version, and traditional Japanese music and musical instruments show great advances over their original Asiatic models.

七
卷
曼
曼
五
編

廣目
天王



多門
天王



四天王

增長
天王



持國
天王



Plate 102. Depicted here is the legendary emperor of China, horns and all, who is supposed to have ruled from 2852 to 2738 B.C. His name, Fu-hsi, has become Futsugi in Japanese. He is remembered affectionately because he discovered the principles of fishing, hunting, and cattle-raising, and then taught these vital arts to his people. His successor, Shen-nung, or Shin-

no, added farming, the arts of medicine, and the principles of trading. In Japan such arts were originally attributed to the earliest native deities, but after the introduction of Buddhism and its pantheon there was much cross-referencing of Shinto and Buddhist deities, much reconciling of conflicting claims through the convenient explanation of reincarnation, unt'l at last even such Chinese

demigods as this became, as it were, naturalized Japanese, acquiring the attributes that had once belonged to indigenous Japanese deities. At the same time the native deities were given Buddhist attributes: as early as the year 783 the Japanese god of war, Hachiman, had been given the Buddhist title of Bodhisattva.

伏羲
犧



Plates 103-4. This double spread presents two of the most continuously popular themes from Chinese history, and the woodblock prints illustrating one or the other must indeed be innumerable. The four top figures represent the four hermits of Mount Shang, who, during the reign of Shin Huang-ti of Ch'in (259-210 B.C.), fled to the hills to escape the ravages of war and turmoil.

Later, when Kao-tsu (247-195 B.C.) established the Han dynasty he beseeched the hermits to serve at his court. They refused, but when Kao-tsu intrigued to pass his title on to the son of his favorite courtesan, bypassing his rightful son, the four hermits publicly announced that they would support the legitimate heir, and their influence proved decisive. The four

were named, reading from left to right, Tung Yuan-kung, Ch'i Li-hsiu, Chio-li Hsien-sheng, and Hsia Huang-kung.

The lower panel shows, together with two serving boys, the seven wise men who fled to a bamboo thicket, where, freed from social pressures, they engaged in esoteric discussions on the teachings of the sage Lao-tse. From left to right the famous



東園公



綺里季



蒯良

劉伶

阮咸

山濤

wise men are- Liu-ling, Chi-k'ang, Yuan-hsien, Shan-t'ao, Wang-yung, Hsiang-hsiu, and Yuan chi.

When such classic subjects as these seemed to have been all but worn threadbare, the woodblock artists of Japan came along to give them new life, satirizing the old subjects by presenting them in contemporary settings. Such prints were called *mitate-e*, "likened

pictures." For example, in an early print called "Parody on the Seven Hermits Among the Bamboos" Harunobu presents the seven sages as seven sexy, alluring young courtesans of Edo. (See Plate 11 of *Harunobu*, Vol. 7 of *Library of Japanese Art*, Tuttle, 1956.)

角里先生



夏黃公



王戎

阮籍

向秀



Plates 105-6. These pages, which do not face in the original *Manga*, are two of a series of four based upon one of the best-loved portions of Chinese Confucian folklore. During the Yuan dynasty (1279-1367) a book was published entitled *The Twenty-four Filial Sages*, depicting persons who had sacrificed their own happiness for that of their parents. It was quickly

introduced into Japan, where it became immensely popular. From left to right: 1) The wife of T'ang Tsui-nan, who was extraordinarily faithful to her mother-in-law, shown here feeding the old lady while her own child clamors for food. (This panel also contains a glaring typographical error, that nightmare of all publishers and doubly so in the case of printing from hand-carved

blocks: the number 9 which the panel bears should be 10.) 2) Yen-tsu, who cured his parents' blindness with deer milk. 3) Sou Chi'en-lou, who served his sick father with unmatched devotion. 4) Kuo-chu, who discovered a pot of gold while digging a grave for a living baby which his mother could not feed. 5) Wu-mao, who exposed his bare back to mosquitoes, so

九
霍
山
南



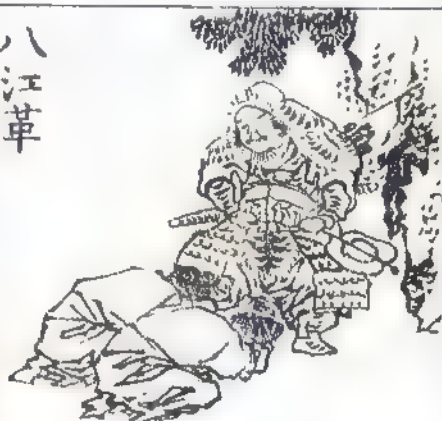
剡
子



士
吳
猛



八
江
革



王
士
祥



陸
九
績



that his mother could sleep. 6) Kiang-ke, who by pleading with a murderous bandit for his mother's life saved his mother and converted the bandit. 7) Lao Lai-tsu, who at age 70 acted like an infant to please his doting parents. 8) Yang-shang, who so impressed a wild tiger with his willingness to offer his own life to protect his mother's that the beast went away hungry. 9) Wang-

chang, who with his own body melted the ice covering a lake so that he could catch a carp for his mother-in-law's dinner. 10) Lu-chih, who searched all China for an orange for his mother. 11) Ts'ai-shun, who impressed a bandit by gathering wild berries for his mother during a famine. 12) Chu Kuai-chang, who searched for his mother for 50 years.

My own favorite among the

24 panels shows Meng Sung digging edible shoots of the prized species of bamboo which now bears his name (Moso in Japanese) for his parents' dinner; it is reproduced as a decoration at the head of page 259.



Plate 107. This highly allusive caption can be translated literally as "Overthrower of castles, overthrower of nations," these being euphemisms common in Japan for designating courtesans, whose effect on the stability of great families was much the same in Japan and China as in England and France. The characters at the bottom signify that this

particular castle-wrecker had musical abilities as well. To judge by her costume, she is probably dancing the role of a court noblewoman of the Heian period. The "castle-wreckers" appear in many Japanese prints, always women of distinguished bearing and almost always involved in tragedy.



Plate 108. Kuan-yu, the famous general of the Shu Han dynasty (221-63), whose life was so exemplary that he became the object of widespread religious veneration. In pre-Communist China there were few villages that did not have some kind of pavilion erected in his honor. In Japan his legend became enshrined in a Kabuki piece in which, while riding a white horse as

a decoration on a painted scroll, he overhears a group of treacherous plotters about to destroy their lord. Enraged, Kuan-yu rides out of the scroll and, with one mighty swipe of his long sword, decapitates the entire cabal.

關公之像
くわんこうのぞう



Plate 109. No character portrayed by woodblock artists gives me more personal delight than Shoki, the demon-killer. Hokusai's representation of this scowling scourge of evil is excellent. One day the T'ang emperor Hsuan-sung (713-55) lay ill and dreamed that a demon entered his room, boldly announcing that he was intent upon destroying the happiness of people and

substituting tragedy. The sick emperor tried to catch the devil, but was powerless; just then a giant wearing a broken black hat leaped into the room brandishing a long sword, with which he killed the demon. He then announced that he was the ghost of a student who had failed the imperial examinations and had bashed his head against the palace wall until he died. Because of this the

emperor had posthumously awarded him rank and titles, and out of gratefulness his spirit had returned to drive all demons out of the empire. At this point the emperor awoke and discovered himself miraculously healed of his sickness. He promptly summoned the artist Wu Tao-tsu and had him paint a picture of Shoki, supposedly the original
(continued on page 274)



鐘馗

Plate 110. Leaving Shoki, we turn from Chinese deities to indigenous Japanese gods, and the first is one of the most powerful. Sarudahiko-daishin already controlled Japan when the Tenson deities descended from the Sun Goddess to establish the Yamato race. In the *Nihon Shoki* chronicle he is described as having a very long nose and eyes like mirrors, with which he frightened

the descending founders of Japan. Later they subdued him, and he became their helpful guide, thus becoming the permanent guardian of all who travel along the highways of Japan.



猿田彦太神
さるだひこたいしん

北條河原王

七

Plate 111. With this portrait of the tragic priest Shunkan, we plunge into Japanese history. Shunkan was a partisan of the Genji clan and thus aroused the bitterness of the Heike faction, who caught him trying to organize a Fujiwara-Genji alliance against the presumptuous Heike. The latter discovered Shunkan's plot in 1177, and, along with three accomplices, he was banished

to the lonely island of Kikai-ga-shima between Kyushu and Okinawa. In 1178 the Heike relented and terminated the banishment of all the plotters except Shunkan, whom we see here as the amnesty ship departs, leaving him to die in solitude. The playwright Zeami, who died in 1443, left behind a notable Noh version of Shunkan's tragedy, as did the novelist Bakin. It has also

become one of the more popular pieces of the standard Kabuki repertoire.



Plate 112. This is the love-demented monk Seigen, whose mad infatuation with Sakurahime, Princess Cherry Blossom, has been tragically depicted in several Kabuki plays. In the earliest version, performed in the doll theater as early as 1674, the princess's husband discovers the monk's spirit in his wife's bedroom and slays both the spirit and, finally, the monk himself. Subsequently

the simple fable was recast into powerful drama, reaching its present form in 1852 in *Kai-goromo Kangane-zome*. In these later versions, stressing psychological factors, Seigen is driven from his monastery in disgrace because of his love for the maiden princess. In a final, and unsuccessful, appeal to the princess, Seigen tears off a sleeve of her kimono, here seen over his arm with a

cherry-blossom pattern, and takes it with him as he seeks lonely refuge deep in the mountains. There is a final scene between Seigen and the princess, now herself seeking refuge in the mountains, during which the monk rushes to embrace her, only to be slain by the servant who accompanies the princess.



Plate 113. This is Vice-Councilor Yukihiro (d. 893), a famous courtier and poet of the Heian period and supposedly the prototype for the "Suma" chapter in Lady Murasaki's famous novel *The Tale of Genji*. Yukihiro got into trouble at court and fled to self-imposed exile at the tiny fishing village of Suma, near the present port-city of Kobe. While there he dispatched a

famous poem to his love at court in Kyoto:

*Should perchance they ask you
where I am,
Tell them that in loneliness
I play with seaweed and salt by
the seas of the Bay of Suma.*

Hokusai here shows Yukihiro in gloom and despair, staring toward the capital, after a storm has wrecked the cere-

mony which was intended to start him on his happy return to the city. The table on which he leans is a Japanese-style writing desk, and beside him is a decorated *hibachi*, or charcoal brazier, for warming the hands.

七
家
集
五
編



中納言
行平
ちゅうなごん
ゆきへい

Plate 114. Of Sugawara no Michizane (845-903), the exalted subject of this sketch, one can never say enough. In real life he was a godlike statesman who suffered unjust banishment and lonely death. In fable, which grew up about him, he became endowed with sage and wonderful gifts; he was posthumously vindicated, given highest rank, and eventually deified, to become one

of Shintoism's more popular gods. As a manifestation of the thunder-god he revenges himself upon his erstwhile enemies and threatens all wrongdoers. As patron of calligraphers he watches over schoolboys learning to write and encourages all literary pursuits. As the subject of one of the two or three greatest Kabuki dramas, Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami (The

Lustrous Imparting of Sugawara's Calligraphic Secrets), his spirit pervades a play of intense tragedy. He is shown here atop Mt. Tempai, which he climbed often during his exile to declare his innocence to the heavens and, facing the capital, to venerate the very emperor who had believed his calumniators.

天
拜
山



Plate 115. Women, too, populated Hokusai's imaginary world. Here he presents one of the many strong-minded women who appear so frequently in both Japanese legend and history, making one wonder how the Western world ever devised the fable that Japanese woman is meek and submissive. Iga no Tsubone, a historical personage, was the wife of Kusunoki Ma-

sanori (1320-83), whose more famous father appears in Plate 177. While serving as a hand-maiden at the court of Emperor Godaigo she unflinchingly faced a ghost that was haunting the palace and, by following the ghost's instructions, was able to appease it and rid the palace of this evil influence. Later, when Godaigo was under attack from troops of the Ashikaga clan, singlehanded

she felled a huge tree to bridge a ravine that had cut off his retreat, thus rescuing the emperor from enemy hands. Hokusai's fine drawing showing the confrontation of the ghost in the palace garden is admirably designed.

伊賀の
賀子
局



Plate 116. The captions to this sketch tell the tearful story: "Taira no Kiyomori approaches the faithful woman" and "Tokiwa offers herself to save her children." The tyrant is the Heike leader who banished Shunkan (Plate 111). Tokiwa Gozen was the mistress of the famous Genji warrior Minamoto no Yoshitomo, and bore him three sons: Yoritomo (1147-99), who was to lead

the Genji clan to final victory and establish the Minamoto as *de facto* rulers of Japan; Noriyori (1156-93); and Yoshitsune (1159-89), the beau ideal of Japanese history, who would defeat Kiyomori at the epic naval engagement of Dan-no-Ura and, later, fleeing his eldest brother's jealousy, commit suicide - or, as one legend has it, flee to Mongolia to become the great Genghis Khan

After the tyrant Kiyomori had defeated and killed Tokiwa's husband, she fled with the three boys, whom Kiyomori intended to kill also. Later, however, she surrendered herself and her sons in order to save her own mother from Kiyomori's tortures and became Kiyomori's mistress. Whether, as Hokusai here suggests, it was this sacrifice

(continued on page 274)



Plate 117. "Daruma Facing the Wall" is a subject so familiar to all Japanese that it has commanded the attention of many artists. After the Buddhist monk Bodhidharma (Daruma in Japanese) came to China from India during the reign of Wu-ti (502-49), he withdrew into a cave for meditation and sat facing the blank wall for nine years, so long that his legs withered away.

(This is the origin of the round-bottomed roly-poly dolls seen everywhere in Japan.) Finally the monk Hui-k'o (in Japanese, Eka) came begging for instruction in the secrets of religion, and cut off one of his own arms to attract Daruma's attention and to prove his immutable determination. It was from the resulting communion between Daruma and Eka that Zen Buddhism, the most powerful re-

ligious and aesthetic force in Japanese history, is supposed to have sprung.

I feel Hokusai's portrait does meager justice to the grandeur of its subject. Certainly it is vastly inferior to Sesshu's magnificent and powerful "Hui-k'o Offering His Arm to Bodhidharma." (See Plates 33-35 in Sesshu, Vol. 10 of Library of Japanese Art, Tuttle, 1957.)

面壁之像



Plate 118. This portrait involves no mythology. Captioned "Portrait of Basho," with "Volume 7" in larger characters, it shows one of the sweetest singers Japan has ever produced. This accounts for the important place it was given as the first plate and quasi title-page of the volume.

Matsuo Munefusa (1644-94), whom the world knows today by his pen name of Basho, was

born a samurai and served under the lord of Iga Province until the age of 22, when he abandoned his home, job, and enviable social status to build a hut under a banana tree (busho) in Edo and begin writing the poems and travel books for which he is famous. He spent most of his life traveling throughout Japan and composing, in the terse, evocative, 17-syllable pattern of the hai-

ku, such memorable poems as:

*On a withered bough
A crow alone is perching,
Autumn evening now.*

(Translation from Kenneth Yasuda's *The Japanese Haiku*, Tuttle, 1957.)



Plate 119. The West has its Roman alphabet and its penmanship, a utilitarian skill acquired – or, often, not acquired – in grade school. China and Japan have their thousands of ideographs and their brush-drawn calligraphy, the source and basis for much of their art, their literature, and their way of thinking. Little wonder then that this calligraphy has been regarded

as a fine art in itself, and that facility with the brush is the mark of both gentility and learning. Here Hokusai pays eloquent tribute to six of Japan's most renowned calligraphers, just as on the preceding page of the *Manga* (not reproduced in this anthology) he did for their Chinese counterparts, from whom Japan indeed derived the art. Reading from left to right

and top to bottom: 1) Kose no Kanaoka, famous painter of the Heian period and reputedly the calligraphy teacher of the godlike Sugawara no Michizane of Plate 114. One of the horses he painted on a door panel of the imperial palace came to life and ate the spray of bush-clover he had painted on an opposite panel. 2) Fujiwara
(continued on page 274)



Plate 120. By common consent, the greatest Japanese painter was Sesshu (1420-1506), and here Hokusai pays him tribute by depicting two famous, if perhaps apocryphal, incidents from his life.

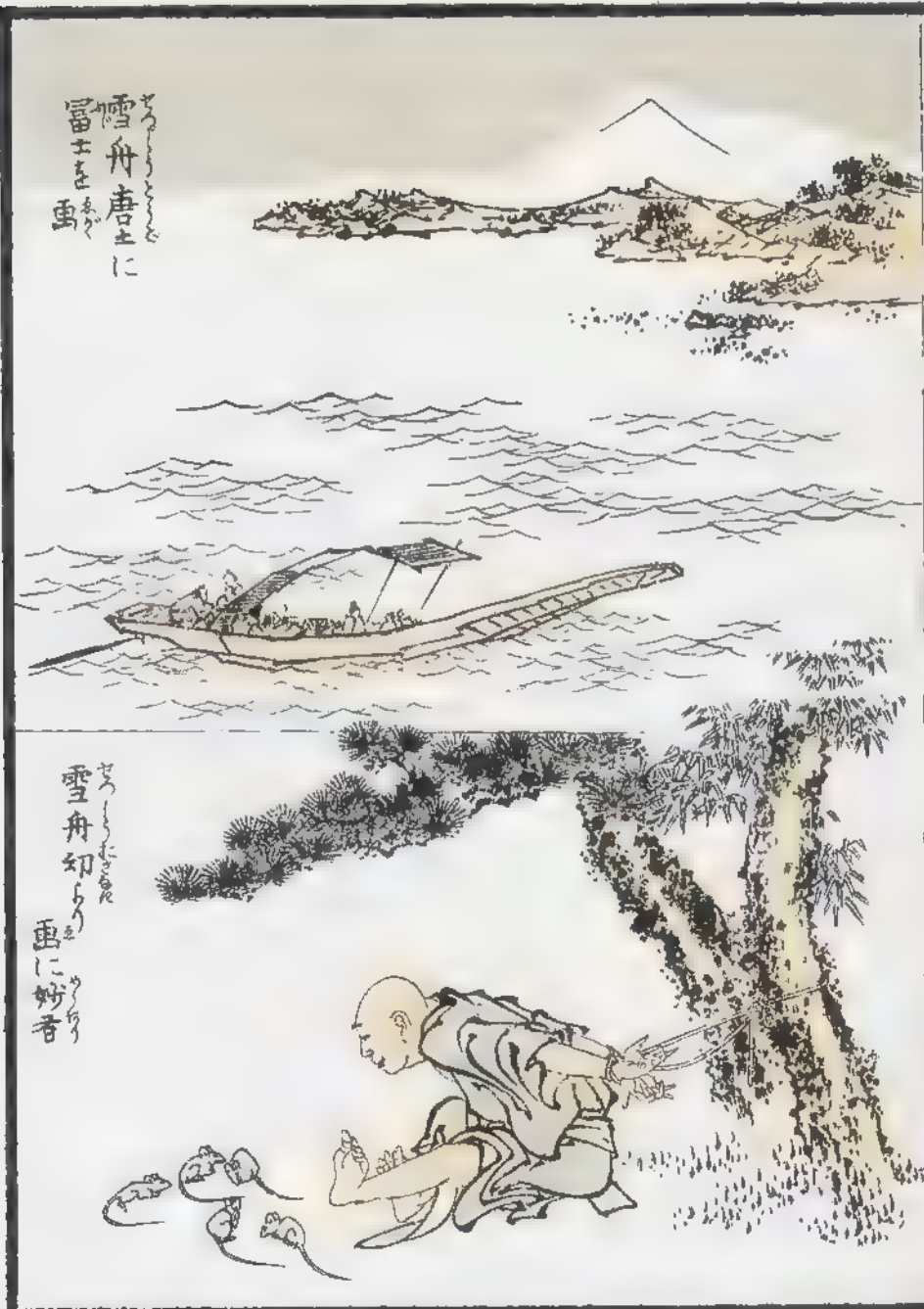
The lower caption reads: "Sesshu shows talent for painting as a young boy." The story goes that even as a novice in a Zen monastery Sesshu showed more interest

in painting than in religious studies. One day he was punished for this by being tied to a stake, but he still continued his painting: using his toes for a brush and tears for ink, he drew on the ground such realistic mice that they gnawed away his ropes. Others claim that although the mice did not actually come to life, they nevertheless so astonished Sesshu's priest-

teacher with their realism that he thereafter encouraged the boy in his painting.

The upper caption reads: "Sesshu paints Mt. Fuji in China." Sesshu is known to have made a visit to China, where his talent as a Chinese-style painter was apparently given wide recognition and where he stored up the myriad impressions of the Chinese

(continued on page 274)



Plates 121-22. Captioned "The extraordinary prowess of the widow Oiko," this sketch is based on an incident related in Volume X of the *Kokon Chomon-shu*, a collection of folk tales compiled by Tachibana Narisue in 1254. The great warrior Saeki Ujinaga was forever boasting of his strength and was finally summoned to participate in a wrestling tournament to be held before the

imperial court in Kyoto. As he rode through the village of Takashima in Omi Province (present Shiga Prefecture), he spied a beautiful woman carrying a pail of water on her head. Much attracted by the woman, who was the widow Oiko, he dismounted and caught her by the hand. Since she did not resist, he gently took her arm, whereupon the woman released her hold on

the pail and clamped his wrist under her armpit. Rugged Saeki tried to escape, but struggle as he would, he could not pull loose, and the woman marched serenely on, her water bucket not even spilling a drop. Now Saeki pleaded to be set free, saying he was due in Kyoto for the wrestling matches. At this the woman laughed and said: "You! Wrestling. You're not strong enough.



But you live with me for three weeks and I'll toughen you up." Still holding his arm trapped fast, she dragged him to her house, where she supplied him with wine, raw rice, and other things. When, after the three weeks, she set him free, he continued on to Kyoto, where he was doubtless unbeatable.



Plates 123-24. This sketch, captioned "Kidomaru spying upon Raiko at Ichiharano," well illustrates the easy manner in which Hokusai drifted back and forth between history and legend. In 994, the emperor Ichijo ordered that a serious attempt be made to drive bandits out of the environs of Kyoto, where they had become sufficiently emboldened to threaten the capital itself.

One of the leaders entrusted with this job was Minamoto no Yorimitsu (944-1021), known as Raiko. On a visit to a friend's, Raiko spotted among a recently captured group of bandits the notorious Kidomaru. "Tie that one up with chains!" Raiko ordered, but in spite of this, Kidomaru escaped. Vowing to destroy Raiko, the wily bandit plagued the countryside and then one day found his chance

for revenge. Killing a cow and hiding himself in its entrails, he ambushed Raiko. But he had the misfortune, when springing forth to kill the general, to run into Japan's most famous demon-killer of the moment, Watanabe no Tsuna, who had recently defeated a famous devil by ripping off its arm. Leaping in front of his lord, Watanabe engaged Kidomaru in a sword duel and killed him,

鬼童丸
市原野小
頼光
窺ふ



protected, so the story goes,
by the demon's blood that had
spilt upon him in the earlier
engagement.



Plates 125-26. About this sketch, captioned "Osakobe no Sugaru capturing the Thunder God at Toyoura," there appears to be some confusion between two legendary heroes, due either to Hokusai's mistake or, as I suspect, to the amorphous nature of the legends themselves. At any rate the two heroes both served the same emperor, Yuryaku (reigned

457-791, and may well be the same person known under two different names.

Probably casting about for something to occupy his wife, Emperor Yuryaku once ordered Osakobe (sometimes read Chisakobe) no Sugaru to bring to the palace all the silk-worms - *ko* - in the countryside. The slow-witted warrior, misunderstanding the order, promptly gathered all the country's

babies - also *ko* in Japanese - and marched up to the palace with thousands of bawling infants. This so amused the emperor that he decided to keep the children and to place Osakobe in charge as permanent nursemaid. Appropriately enough, the name Osakobe can be translated roughly as meaning "Children's Bureau."

On another occasion a tremendous thunderstorm so



frightened the palace that the emperor said this time the Thunder God had simply gone too far. So he ordered Kotari (also known as Chusako) no Muroji to go capture the god. Mounted on his steed atop Thunder Mountain (evidently the scene depicted by Hokusai), Kotari was such an awesome sight that the Thunder God tumbled down from his perch, revealing himself to be

a 60-foot monster, and was dragged back to the palace by Kotari. Even today there is a village near Toyoura with the name Ikazuchi-mura "Thunder Village."

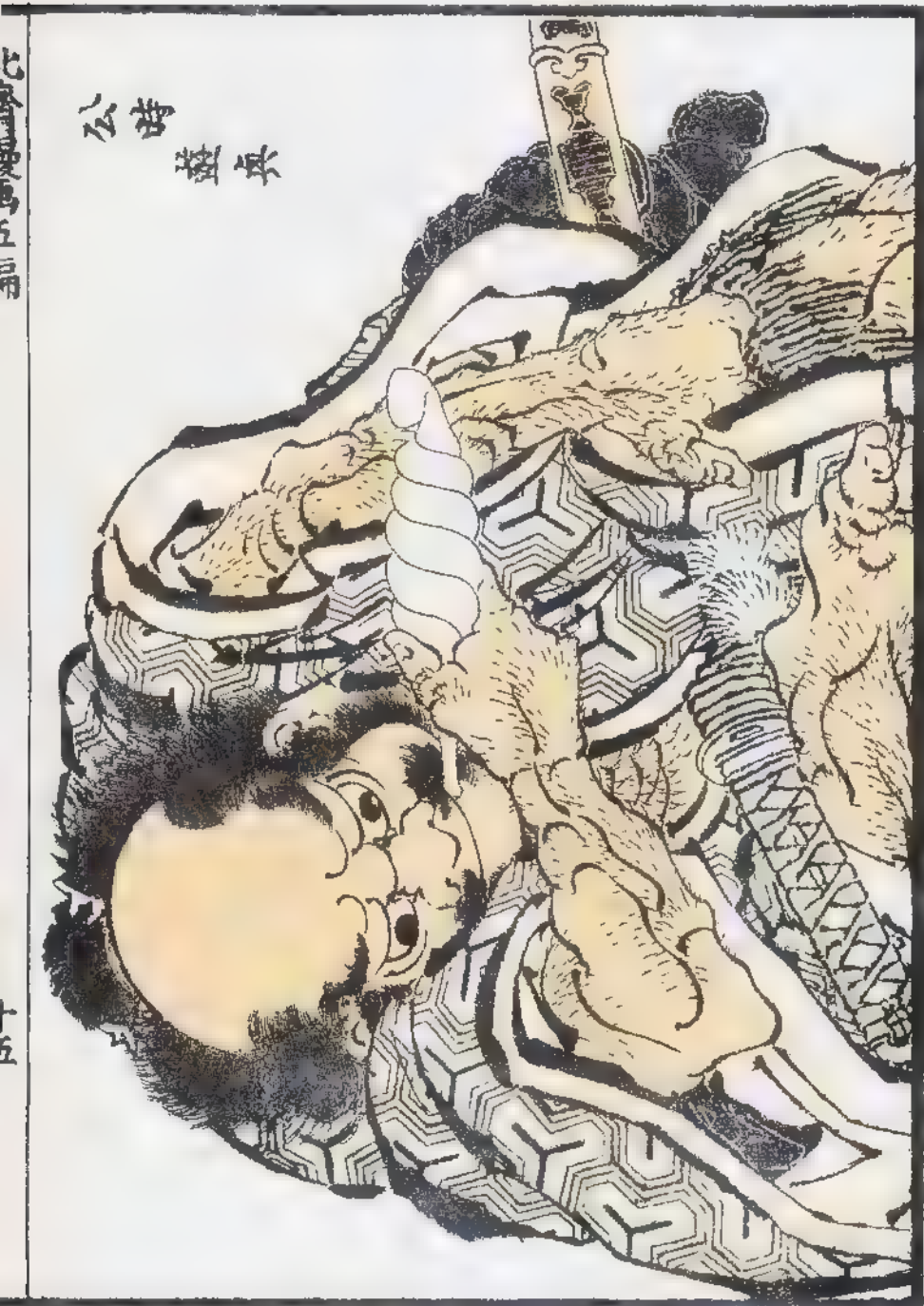


Plates 127-28. This powerful diptych, captioned "Kintoki disporting himself," is so crowded with Japanese history and legend that Hokusai's mind was surely teeming with associations as he drew it. Under the boyhood name of Kintaro, "Golden Boy," Kintoki is one of the most beloved characters in all of Japan's delightful children's folklore. Abandoned in the mountains

as an infant, he was found and raised by a yamauba, a semi-supernatural "old woman of the mountains." Some of the greatest woodblock prints show the old woman nurturing the boy. With bears as his wrestling companions, monkeys as tutors in agility, and all the other denizens of the forest, both natural and supernatural, as playmates and mentors, Kintaro became a veritable

wonder boy, stronger than the infant Hercules, more loyal than Damon, much wiser than Tarzan, and more playful than Paul Bunyan. But, even so, his amazing career was still far from done

One day in March, 976, the great general Raiko (Minamoto no Yoritomo, of Plates 123-24) was marching from future Edo, not yet founded, over the rugged Hakone



Mountains near Fuji-san when he saw a strange red cloud hovering above a distant peak. He sent one of his lieutenants, Watanabe no Tsuna (the slayer of Kidomaru, Plates 123-24), to investigate. Thus did Raiko discover Kintaro, whom he renamed Kintoki and made one of the four lieutenants who are known as "Japan's Four Deva Kings" (see Plate 161) because of their remarkable exploits.

Kintoki proved to be not only a great military hero but also an expert demon-killer, having well learned the ways of demons during his boyhood. He was particularly death on *tengu*, the winged beings which are sometimes shown with long noses (Plate 131) and sometimes, as in the present sketch, with crowlike beaks. So well did he perform his task of ridding Japan of these

troublesome devils that today only a very few remain to molest the islands he loved.



天狗退治王

十六

Plate 129. Our final historical sketch contains no demons or legends whatever, but does show forces more threatening to an isolated Japan than even Kintoki's devilish tengu. Hokusai captions this: "On August 26, 1543, these foreigners were cast upon the island of Tane-gashima in Okuma Province." The names of the two castaways, probably Portuguese,

are also attempted: "Mura-shukusha" and "Kirishitamota." (These names are omitted from some printings.) It is historically accurate that the first Western firearms entered Japan by way of this small island between Kyushu and Okinawa, probably in the form of two hunting pieces which the lord of the island is said to have bought from sailors off a wrecked Portuguese trading vessel. At any

rate, using these first guns as models and these or other Portuguese as technical advisors, the lord manufactured copies, the first guns ever made in Japan. These quickly spread throughout Japan, being widely copied and improved, so that by the time Hideyoshi invaded Korea in 1592, he had several divisions so armed.



ムラシユクシヤ
牟良叔舍
キリシタモウタ
喜利志多孟太

天文三癸卯八月廿六日
大隅国種子島漂流

GROTESQUERIES



LIKE Hieronymous Bosch, Hokusai found in life many grotesque aspects, which he loved to lampoon, and any anthology which omitted adequate coverage of his fantasies would only incompletely represent his many-sided genius.

His grotesqueries took two forms. In one he presents wry speculation on what would happen if men's noses were twenty times as long as they are, or if necks could be conveniently extended. In this category also come the sequences on magic, whereby a man could make himself invisible, or could breathe bees or make waves spring from between his palms. These are folklore materials common to most societies, and they are not distinguished artistically, but in Hokusai's fertile imagination they do have a humorous quality that endears them to us. In fact, his grotesqueries in this form have been lauded as authentic Japanese humor, a judgment in which I concur.

But it is his second group of fantasies that are the more important, both psychologically and artistically. These drawings deal with the terrifying ghosts that haunt Japan, and in studying Hokusai's depiction of these fiends, the Western observer becomes convinced that for the artist these ghosts were real. Faithful wives whose husbands abused them were known to have the capacity of returning after death to haunt their spouses. Blood cried out from the grave, and victims of injustice gained revenge. In many of his drawings Hokusai gives evidence of the torture he himself must often have felt, and he portrays man's mental misery with insight and compassion.

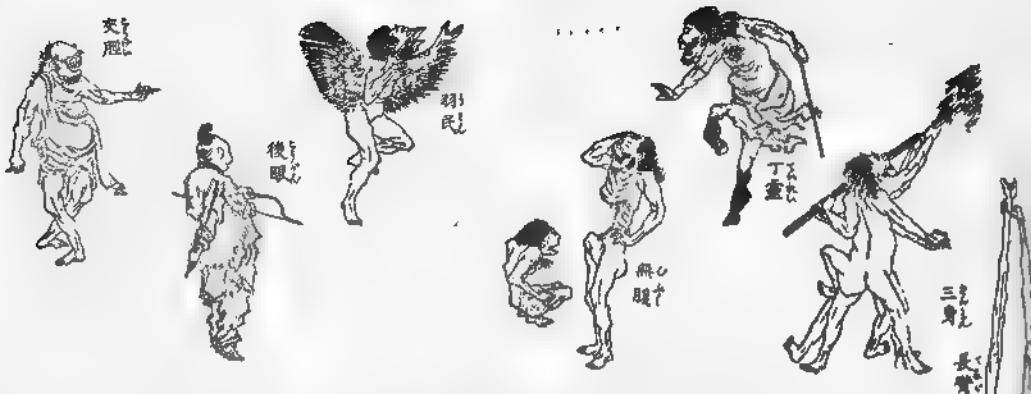
The artistry with which Hokusai draws ghosts seems to me to be of a much higher quality than that expended on mere fantastic scenes. With his ghosts he shows a lyrical freshness and an extraordinary invention; but, even so, his *Manga* ghost scenes fall short of the magnificent series of small, squarish prints titled *The Hundred Ghost Stories*—I have seen only five different subjects—in which, with superb craftsmanship and almost terrifying color, he reports popular tales. These prints are acknowledged masterpieces of horror art; not even Hieronymous Bosch has excelled the simple terror of Hokusai's cobra-like serpent coiling itself about a collection of gifts for the dead, or a woman's ghost about to strike down a cruel husband.



Hokusai lived in a demon-riddled world, where, as we have seen, gods and spirits and men overlapped, where ghosts walked, and where a man could quickly allow himself to slip away into fantasy. The laws of decency do not permit reproducing here the esoteric prints which summarize his fevered imaginings in the realm of sex; and this is a pity, for it is these prints which prove the wild extent to which this man's fantasy could run. I have found the sexual prints tortured and demonic; others have found them robust and amusing. I think that my reactions stem from the contempt which Hokusai obviously shows for the prison of sex within which most men live, just as certain of his less salacious grotesque prints demonstrate something of the contempt he felt for the physical or mental prisons in which we are confined.

This is not speculation on my part; in Yoshiwara brothels today certain sexual performances are still known colloquially as "Hokusai style," the tradition of his influence on that quarter of Tokyo having been kept alive for more than a century and a half. It is reasonably certain that Hokusai had explored life widely and had worked out some kind of treaty whereby he could stand aside and view the entire process with gentle contempt. If we can accept the courageous behavior of his last forty years, it is impossible to believe that he ever became disgusted with life; he never surrendered to the tragic sense that marks some of his prints. Even if the evidence of his last works were not before us—those sunny, spacious prints reflecting the world's glory—we could still rely upon his own death cry, when he pleaded for an extension of the life he had loved so passionately. It is therefore impossible to conclude that this sardonic man ever rejected the life he ridiculed, or denied the mankind against which he slammed his door so that he could continue work.

I believe that Hokusai's attitudes toward life are best summarized in two series of prints, the *Imagery of the Poets* and the *Ghost Stories*. In the former he offers us the stately architectural landscapes of the human spirit; in the latter he shows us the evil ghosts that haunt all men. It is in this dualism that Hokusai most nearly approaches Rembrandt, whose alternation between human misery and human exaltation is so marked a characteristic.



Hokusai never achieved the psychological penetration attained by Rembrandt in his finest portraits, just as the Dutchman never equaled Hokusai's best landscapes. But in their brooding preoccupation with the solitary and ghost-haunted nature of man's existence—and especially in their drawings—they were comparable.

Invariably I return to Hokusai's grotesqueries with the same love that I have grown to feel for Rabelais and Balzac and Bosch. Sensible men know that there is a wild, chaotic nonsense in the world, alternately ridiculous and terrifying, and although one must strive to keep one's self insulated against it, none ever wholly succeeds, and it is proper now and then to see this chaos paraded in visual form.

Plate 130. This fanciful page of "foreign barbarians," like Plates 143-44 and many other pages of the *Manga*, probably owes much to the descriptions given of foreign lands in a monumental 81-volume "encyclopedia," the *Wakan Sansai Zu-e*. Containing all manner of "facts," important and trivial, imagined and real, from the past and present, based largely upon

the folklore of China and Japan, this collection was compiled over a 30-year period by a court physician from Osaka named Teraajima Ryoan; the last volume was published about 1715, and the series was still much in vogue in Hokusai's day. The *Wakan Sansai Zu-e* lists 177 foreign lands inhabited by much the same sort of strange and fanciful people as those depicted here, among

whom the following have been identified.

1) The man upper left with the rope-like neck is captioned "Flying-head barbarian," whose eyes have no irises and who inhabits the land called Daigaba. 2) The man upper right with a circular hole in his middle is captioned "Dug-out chest." In his country there are two classes: nobles and commoners.

(continued on page 274)



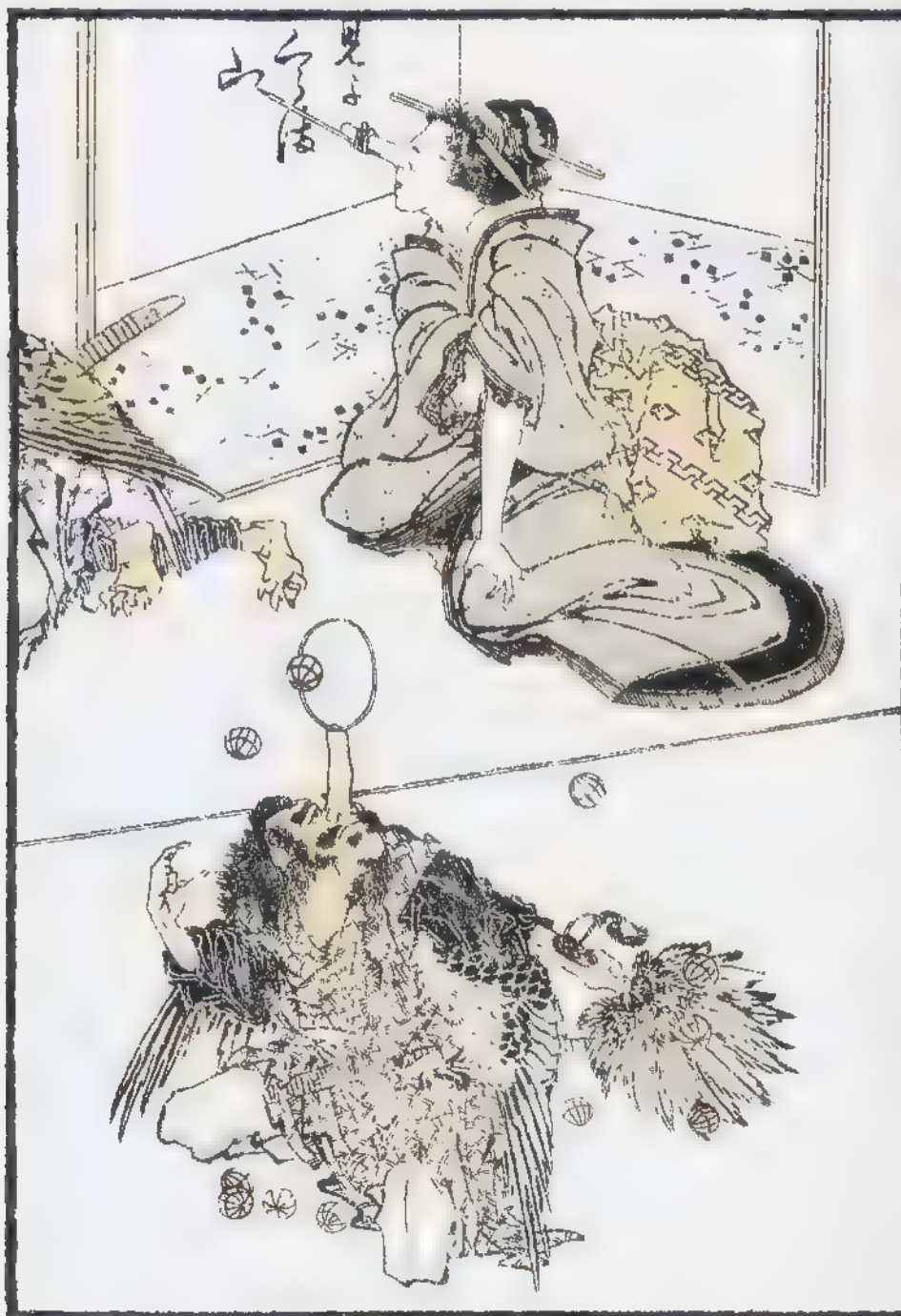
Plates 131-32. This fanciful sketch demonstrates the advantages enjoyed by *tengu* of the long-nosed variety (see also Plates 127-28). These *tengu* are dressed in the oddly shaped cap and traveling costume of the *yamabushi*, members of a unique Japanese sect of Buddhism called *Shugendō*, founded by En no Ozunu (634-701). Ozunu was an inveterate mountain-climber

he is said to have been the first human to climb sacred Fuji and to have remained atop Mt. Katsugi for 30 years eating nothing but nuts and fruits and praying to Buddhist deities, thereby acquiring magic powers. Later he led his followers up other mountains, dedicating them to Buddha, and acquiring new devotees wherever he went. In the Kamakura period of

Japanese history (1185-1333) the movement acquired considerable political power. The *yamabushi* were neither monks, nor commoners, nor samurai, but a sort of combination of all three, a unique group of sword-carrying, priestly adventurers who often seemed more like bandits. The mischievous *tengu* are often pictured impersonating the derring-do *yamabushi*, probably as a sly



commentary upon the latter's unpriestlike activities. The woman writing poetry on the screen is apparently a human who, for obvious reasons, feels more at ease with her *tengu* companions.



Plates 133-34. Hokusai loved to contemplate the ridiculous, and here he investigates some of the advantages of having a long neck, one of the standard subjects of popular Japanese folklore. The woman at the right can smoke at a safe distance from the bedclothes, doubtless enjoying the respite from the wooden *pi* low which the elaborate Japanese coiffures made neces-

sary for her less fortunate countrywomen. Next to her, an old woman can remain seated but nevertheless get her head into a better position for listening to the monk play the *samisen*, having a third arm helps with her pipe-smoking too. One of the artist's hoppiest conceits is the enterprising oculist who has devised an especially appropriate set of glasses for his friend.





Plate 135. One of the most hideous historical ghosts to plague Japan inhabited the village of Hau in Chiba Prefecture toward the beginning of the 18th century. It was rumored that the woman Kasane was born so ugly because her mother had drowned Kasane's half sister by an earlier marriage. At any rate, the mother left Kasane an unbelievably ugly face and a plot

of valuable land. To obtain the latter, the peasant Yoemon married Kasane, and promptly murdered her. For years she haunted the countryside, driving Yoemon's subsequent wives to their deaths. In despair the now-rich farmer begged the priest Yuten, shown here, to exorcise the apparition. Yuten, who was a historical personage, succeeded, but insisted that Yoemon become a monk.

Whether in recognition of this valorous deed or for some other reason, the shogun Ienori appointed Yuten bishop, with which rank he died in 1718, head priest of Daigon Temple, not far from Hau. This legend formed the subject of several Kabuki plays.



Plate 136. Captioned "The ghost of Kiku and the priest Mikazuki," this sketch is based upon another famous ghost story, *Bancho Sara-Yashiki*, which has supplied material for one of the most moving tragedies of the Kabuki stage. Kiku was a maidservant in the Edo household of Aoyama Shuzen. One day she accidentally broke one of a set of ten porcelain dishes treasured by

her master. He punished her so severely that she committed suicide by jumping into an old well, and thereafter every night the mournful voice of her ghost could be heard from the well, counting the nine remaining dishes. Here the ghost of Kiku, hovering over the fenced-off well, is being exorcized by a priest. Note here, as in the preceding plate, that one of the distin-

guishing characteristics of Japanese ghosts is the lack of feet, creating staging problems which the Kabuki has solved with the greatest of ingenuity.

This and the preceding plate faced each other in the original Manga also.



Plate 137. Hokusai captioned this fancy *Kimo ga imo ni naru* (Their livers become potatoes), one of those almost inexplicable wordplays which so delight the Japanese, in whose language, as we have already seen, most characters can be read in several ways. Here the brunt of the humor depends on rhyme, since *kimo*, meaning "liver" and by extension "courage," rhymes with

imo, "potato." The farmers were digging potatoes when they uncovered a huge octopus, which, as everyone knows, loves nothing so much as raw potatoes. Japanese relish such verbal conceits, but it must be pointed out that this one is much less complex than most, some of which require a full page of English to explain all the interlocking ramifications of a single word.



Plate 138. "Eel climb,"
Hokusai captions this sketch
The box-like object is a
signboard for a restaurant
which sells grilled eels like
the ones we saw in Plates 5
and 15. At first this drawing
seems simply to be an excel-
lent representation of the
trouble men might have if eels
were many times their present
size, but the title also has a
much different meaning. "Eel

climb" in Japanese has some-
thing of the same meaning as
"greased lightning" in English
and is used to describe a per-
son's extremely rapid ad-
vancement in social rank or
business success.



鰻登り

北斎漫画六巻

五

Plates 139-40. These two pages, facing each other in the original, demonstrate tricks of magic which Japanese folklore insists certain magicians were once able to perform. The Chinese characters recite the names by which these astonishing feats were called.

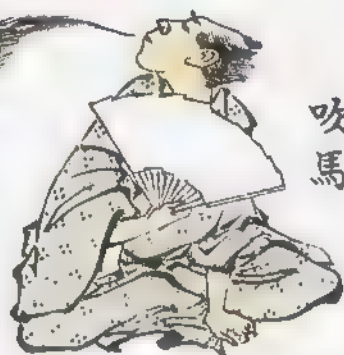
On the left: 1) vanishing magic, 2) sleeve magic, 3) exhaling bees, and 4) vase magic.

On the right: 1) exhaling a horse, 2) smoke face, 3) sword-eating, and 4) waves from the palms. As can be seen from study, some of the feats were common, practical tricks. Others would have been rather sensational in any age. But as might be anticipated, Hokusai feels no obligation to differentiate between the two.





吹馬



烟面



吞刀



掌中浪



Plates 141-42. So far as the art history of the *Manga* is concerned, this sketch is of unusual importance. The caption at the right reads simply "Flying lion," the Japanese word for lion, *shishi*, being used for both the actual animal and the fanciful "temple dog" of Chinese art seen here. As such it indicates that this is a bold drawing in a derivative Chinese style, which I happen

to find rather satisfying, for the heavy, free drawing, which must have been even bolder in the original before the woodcarver got to it, well matches the grotesque subject. It is the caption upper left which is noteworthy, however, for this reads: "Outline the clouds in black; apply gold and silver powder." Of itself such advice would not be significant, but we must note

that this sketch comes from Volume XIV and is thus part of a publication put together from Hokusai's papers collected long after his death. What would be more likely in such circumstances than for the man who did the collecting to catch hold of some finished design that Hokusai had intended for a print, with his instructions already jotted down, and to include it in the



volume of sketches? If Hokusai himself had been organizing the sketches, he would probably not have used such a finished drawing. The presence of this sketch in Volume XIV lends credence to the suspicion that he had little or nothing to do with the selection of material for Volumes XIV and XV, even though the publisher of the latter, in his preface, claims otherwise.



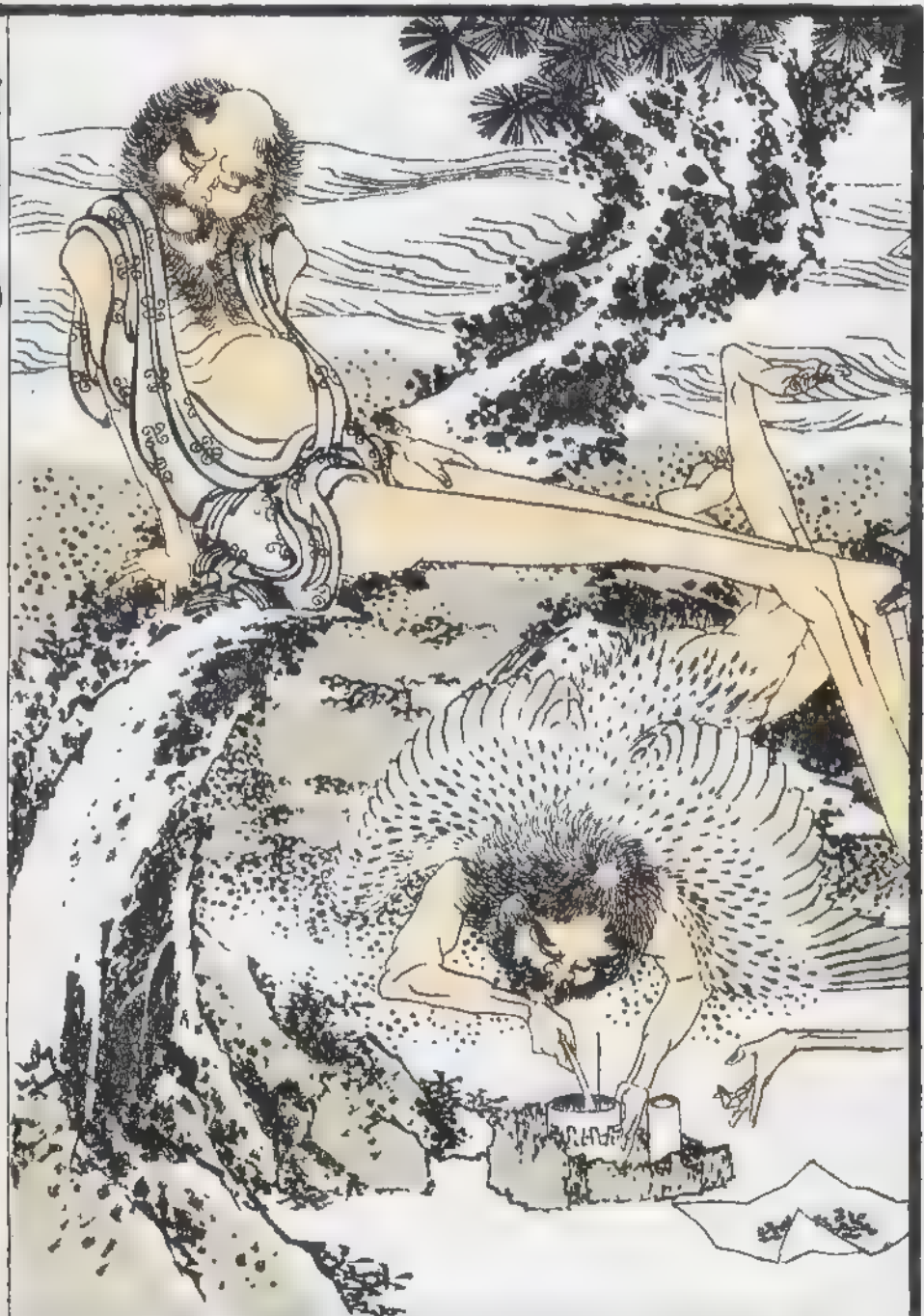
とび原とす
飛上獅子

Plate 143-44. The strange caption of this even stranger sketch is "Moxa-burning in foreign lands." As early as 1796, when he published *Shiki Nami-gusa*, an early book of prints showing foreigners imitating Japanese customs, Hokusai had revealed a Shakespearean whimsy in describing the supposed residents of alien lands; and the present sketch, like those of Plate

130, is a fine example of his exaggerated visions. Whether such works arose, as I suspect, out of a keen sense of the ridiculous or, on the other hand, out of an insular inability to imagine a land where customs like those of Japan did not exist, Hokusai was probably quite convinced that such people as those here depicted actually existed somewhere in the great world outside, the

strange world of "barbarians," which his government had so carefully kept at the greatest possible distance.

Moxa-burning, which consists of burning on affected portions of the skin small pyramids of a punk-like substance in order to stimulate nerve ends, used to be widely practiced throughout Japan and is still popular as a home cure for various recalcitrant ills. Several



well-known woodblock prints display the indifference of warriors as the moxa burns into their flesh.

Here the long-armed man is preparing to apply the pyramids of moxa, now lying on the paper, to the patient's knee, while the winged man is lighting a pipe at a tobacco tray (seen earlier in Plate 9). The pipe will apparently be used to light the moxa, which

will in time burn toward the nerve ends in the patient's knee and excite them.

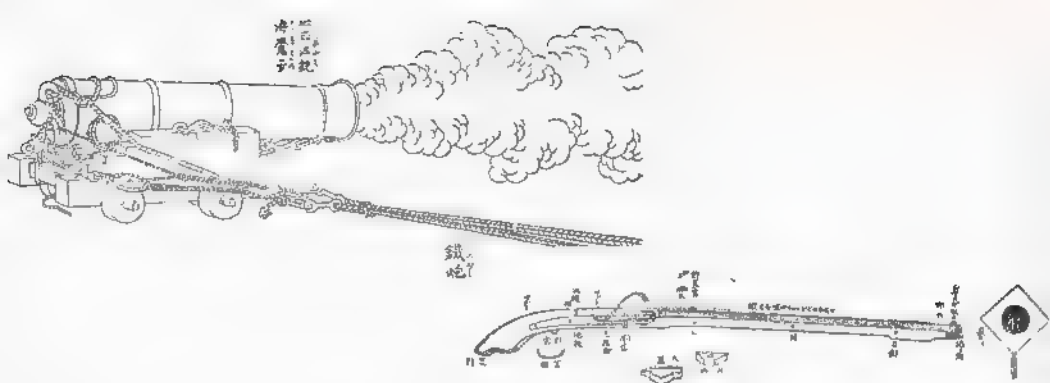
The right leg of the man squatting at the far right should, of course, be colored pink. Through an error of the wood-carver's, in some editions of the Manga it is left white.



Plate 145. In what may well be an unwitting Japanese version of the popular Renaissance subject, the temptation of St. Anthony, Hokusai here apparently shows us the devils that beset a Buddhist saint. The fiendish crew assaults the tormented old man in a variety of ways and with many terrors. Both the drawing and the convoluted design are excellent.



TECHNICAL



THE WESTERN student of the *Manga* is usually surprised to discover that Hokusai believed in ghosts and that he was also largely unable to distinguish between history and religious fable. These characteristics separate Hokusai from his Western contemporaries by substantial barriers; but actually the greatest difference between Hokusai and his European contemporaries arose in a more important field. Yet it was in this area of his greatest disadvantage that Hokusai made his most conspicuous progress.

In Hokusai's day, Japanese science had advanced to a point which European science had reached in the age of Giotto, almost five centuries earlier. The principles of the wheel and the lever had of course been discovered centuries before and were being utilized in increasingly complex ways; spinning and weaving machines were in use; and a practical architecture which yielded fine buildings had been evolved; but the scientific probing that marked the age of Michelangelo and Leonardo was still to come, and if one compares the intellectual equipment available to an Italian artist like Raphael with the milieu in which Hokusai worked, the advantage of the former is really staggering. Almost every technical component of Raphael's art had been explored and developed to its maximum by his predecessors, and the divine draftsman of the Renaissance was able to capitalize on their energies. Quite the opposite was the case with Hokusai, and much of what he accomplished can be credited to his own persistent preoccupation with scientific problems.

I am not arguing that scientific knowledge is a requisite for great art. I would cite Pisanello as an artist who ignored science and nevertheless created some of the most perfect pictures ever painted, and I would suppose that woodblock artists like Harunobu and Shunsho would have ignored scientific knowledge had it been available to them. But in the cases of other artists, like Leonardo and Hokusai, Piero della Francesca and Kuniyoshi, we are dealing with men who were frequently preoccupied with science—it was the technical foundation of their work, their obvious monomania—and in these instances the Japanese artists worked at a deplorable disadvantage, not because of their own deficiencies or basic incapacities, but because they happened to live in a society which had not yet turned its

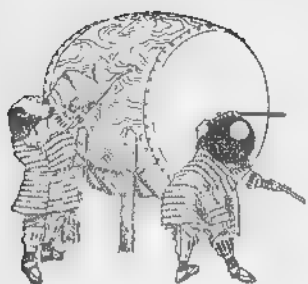


attention to scientific matters. Whatever Hokusai or Kuniyoshi achieved in the field of science was therefore a double victory: not only the triumph of an individual mind over the perpetual mysteries of the universe, but also a very personal accomplishment against the grain of their own contemporary society.

Therefore, the biggest surprise in the *Manga* is the evidence it provides of Hokusai's considerable interest in technical matters. Continually throughout the series Hokusai explores unusual matters, seeking to find answers to everyday problems which have perplexed him, or applying his far-ranging mind to exercises in pure speculation. The pages that follow provide only a brief summary of the types of problems investigated by this unschooled Japanese artist, but they are representative and they do indicate the extreme range of his inquiries.

One can describe this range simply: Hokusai was interested in everything. He contemplated the formation of clouds, how snow fell, how hail was formed, and by what strategies a general should organize troops. He was greatly interested in medicine and, outside the *Manga*, published a complete treatise on his discovery of a self-cure for paralysis. All advances in machinery fascinated him, and he constantly studied the principles of perspective as picked up from smuggled Dutch books on the subject. His studies of Negroes remind one of Rubens' earlier investigations, while his drawings of animals which he had heard about but never seen recall the similar fanciful drawings of pre-Renaissance artists in Italy and Germany.

There is one European artist with whom comparison is inevitable. Indeed, it is difficult to see how any literate Westerner can inspect the following pages without automatically comparing them with the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci. I feel reasonably certain that some of Hokusai's sketches—discounting the fact that in their present form they have been cut onto blocks—could be inserted into Leonardo's sketchbooks without detection; while it is obvious that many of Leonardo's studies, if engraved by Hokusai's woodblock cutters, could fit naturally into the *Manga*. The two men were of identical personality insofar as the everyday application of scientific principles was concerned. In various international exhibitions—the latest in



London and Rome—I have been able to study a good percentage of Leonardo's extant scientific sketches, and one can easily consult the others in excellent monographs; and I find in them a Hokusai quality: a vigorous, penetrating, speculative mind. In style, too, Hokusai's work resembles Leonardo's, although it is obvious that the Japanese artist probably never saw a Leonardo drawing, or anything like one.

Leonardo was born in 1452; Hokusai, in 1760. Had Hokusai been a European, one would have the right to expect his work to reflect the advances which had taken place in science in the three hundred years since Leonardo. Actually, of course, the opposite condition holds, and Hokusai's work, scientifically, is about two hundred years behind Leonardo's. This in no way impugns Hokusai's intellect; it merely reports the difference that existed between Renaissance Italy and late-feudal Japan.

Since Hokusai has sometimes been termed the Japanese Leonardo, and since what I have so far written demonstrates that I think there is much to be said for the catch phrase, I must make its limitations clear. Leonardo was a first-rate scientific investigator; Hokusai was a casual amateur explorer. Leonardo possessed an acute analytical mind; Hokusai experienced at best rare flashes of insight into the physical world and showed no signs in his work of having pursued any problem to great depths. Leonardo, by the utilization of most of the scientific knowledge available to his society, had trained himself in the principles of science; Hokusai, because he had neither Leonardo's kind of mind to spur himself on nor Leonardo's kind of society to support him, never developed into a trained observer. Leonardo was patronized by the lay rulers of his age and was encouraged even by the Church; Hokusai must have been looked upon with suspicion by his superiors. (In Hokusai's time other Japanese investigators of the scientific principles of warfare were put in jail; I have never understood how Hokusai escaped.) But the greatest difference between the two lay in the fact that Hokusai, along with his practical interest in science, carried with him a loyalty to ghosts, demons, demigods, and mysteries; whereas Leonardo was almost wholly an intellectual purist who was willing to accept the dictates of science, wherever they led. Devout women tourists from Iowa and Brazil



look upon "The Last Supper" as an exhibition of mystical faith; it is pretty certain that Leonardo looked upon it as an exercise in perspective and design.

At the same time, the similarities between Leonardo and Hokusai must be acknowledged. Both had interests as wide as the physical universe. Both conducted studies in medicine and physiology. Both were fascinated by warfare. Both were good reporters. And, above all, we treasure their work today primarily because each was able to record his conclusions in drawings that have much scientific interest but even more artistic merit.

In summary, then, one finds in Leonardo a great artist whose society encouraged him to pursue his investigations until he reached an exalted plane of pure speculation; whereas Hokusai's society not only gave him no encouragement but was unable even to provide him with a modest platform from which to launch his inquiries. Therefore, in actual scientific accomplishment it is unfair to compare the two men. Leonardo the scientist towers over Hokusai the way the greater Alps tower over Fuji-san. In artistic merit, comparison shows the two men to have been more nearly equal, and I rather feel that it was Hokusai who put to superior artistic use the discoveries he made. But in the joy with which these two dissimilar men explored their universe, with whatever abilities they possessed, Leonardo and Hokusai stand as absolute equals. They are truly enjoyable men to be with, for they quicken our perception of the world in which we live.

Granting all the above limitations under which Hokusai labored, the question remains: how good a scientist was he? I am afraid he never passed beyond the stage of enthusiastic amateur. He added nothing new to science, not even in Japan, where the starting point in his age was so relatively low. He was never particularly accurate, and even in matters where careful observation—leaving aside matters of speculation or insight—would have permitted him to do better work, he usually failed to record precisely what could have been seen. His speculation, although extremely broad, was rarely profound; while his drawing, based as it had to be upon Asian standards of perspective, usually leaves the scientist either frustrated or perplexed. These are not my personal, unsupported judgments.

In 1954, A. Hyatt Mayor, curator of prints for the Metropolitan Museum



of Art, in New York, arranged an ingenious exhibition in which he displayed six centuries of prints and drawings by master artists who had elected to study the anatomy of man. Hokusai, who had worked later than most of the artists selected, was chosen to represent Asian anatomists, and for the first time he was exhibited alongside profound scholars like Dürer, Leonardo, Pollaiuolo, and Ingres. Two diptychs from the *Manga* were shown, the famous "Thin Men" and "Fat Men," parts of which are reproduced in this anthology (see Plates 15 to 18).

From a purely scientific point of view, Hokusai's supposed anatomical drawings were ludicrous. Practically every great European artist who turned his attention even slightly to this subject knew more than Hokusai, whose deficiencies and downright inaccuracies were glaringly exposed. I do not see how, after this exhibition, one could call Hokusai a serious student of anatomy, an accomplishment on which he prided himself and which his friends cited as one of the reasons why his *Manga* was such a success with art students.

Yet I noticed repeatedly during this exhibition that visitors were apt to linger longest before the Hokusai plates. In these drawings of ugly, twisted little human beings there was something universal. They presented not anatomy; they presented mankind.

Plate 146. This page presents various celestial phenomena connected with storms and well illustrates Hokusai's basic approach to science as something to be observed in generalities rather than studied minutely, and without too much effort to distinguish between actualities and superstitions. As the sources of these captions have remained obscure, little more can be attempted

here than literal, character-by-character translations. Left: "Shining-smoke-willow," probably a form of lightning. Upper right: "Flock of crows," probably a reference to the ill omen represented by such a sight and particularly noteworthy here as being apparently classified in Hokusai's mind along with thunder and lightning. Lower right: "Trembling-fire violent-thunder."

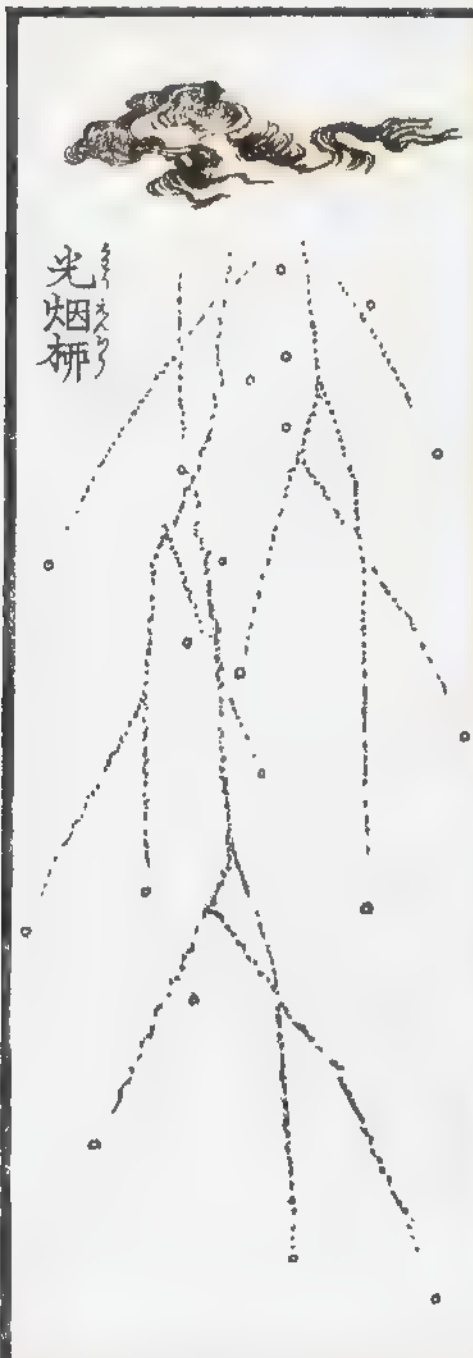


Plate 147. Captioned "Waterwheels," this sketch is practically self-explanatory as to what Hokusai meant to represent even though one may doubt the accuracy of the drawing in such details as that of the rope's staying miraculously attached to the X-shaped spokes and the stream's appearing to continue right under the lowest wheel, thus making meaningless the man's labor.

The man is evidently supposed to be lifting water from the river into his paddy field, a practice still to be seen in Japan today. The significance of the float which dangles into the water from the bamboo pole in the upper reaches of the stream is not clear: perhaps it represents a way of making scarecrows active enough to be effective, always a very real problem in a coun-

try like Japan, where both bird and man are so very dependent upon rice for their daily sustenance.



Plate 148. To me this has always seemed an especially pleasing sketch, combining as it does good draftsmanship and design with Hokusai's obvious delight in depicting clever labor-saving devices. But from the point of view of science it is interesting because the artist apparently failed to comprehend the technical principles involved. He, and not the inventor of the ma-

chine, has distributed the length of his bar in such a manner and established his fulcrum so faultily that the amount of water to be caught in the scoop could never possibly outbalance the rock-weighted plunger that is to do the grinding of the rice. Probably the bar Hokusai studied had exactly opposite proportions to this one, in which case the machine would work. Of course, it is possible

that Mokusaï, while aware of the mechanical improbability, was here more interested in the artistic composition.



Plates 149-50. These two facing pages of swimmers and under-water figures, while not forming a diptych in the proper sense, since they are not inter-related in design, nevertheless have the diptych quality and will be so treated. They have always delighted me and remain, for my taste at least, one of the most interesting and enjoyable pairs of pages in the *Manga*. It is difficult to explain

why this should be. Neither the design nor the drawing is exceptional, while the scientific content is slight. Perhaps it is because these pages illustrate almost perfectly the quality of Hokusai's concern with scientific matters. Here he is daydreaming about the problems of men in water: how to swim when fording a river aided by a horse; how to dive when helped by a

pole; how a man's kimono stands out when he is swimming under water; the ease with which a man could catch fish—perhaps. The caption upper right reads "Belly-band float."

Yet when these free fancies attract us most, and seem to dominate the drawings, there remains that haunting man in a bell jar, suspended in the ocean and able to see the mysteries of the deep. This



was pure imagination in 1816,
the date of this sketch, but of
course today it has become
reality. It is for these reasons
that I prize these pages.



Plate 151. In a sense, it is unfair to criticize this sketch as showing Hokusai's frequent faulty observation of the simplest scientific facts—in this case the placement of the moon in reference to what must surely be the Big Dipper—and yet I am convinced that no one even slightly versed in anyman's astronomy would locate the moon in the celestial polar regions, not even when

depicting, as here, night in the mythical Buddhist land of Shumi at the center of the universe.

Shumi is closely defined in Buddhist lore: it has a mountain 8,000,000 miles high and extending 8,000,000 miles below the surface of the sea; it is composed exclusively of silver, gold, emerald, and agate. Distances on Shumi are equally extravagant: the wind layer upon which it rests is 160,000,-

000,000 miles thick; the water and gold layers combined are 112,000,000,000 miles deep and 123,450,000,000 miles across.

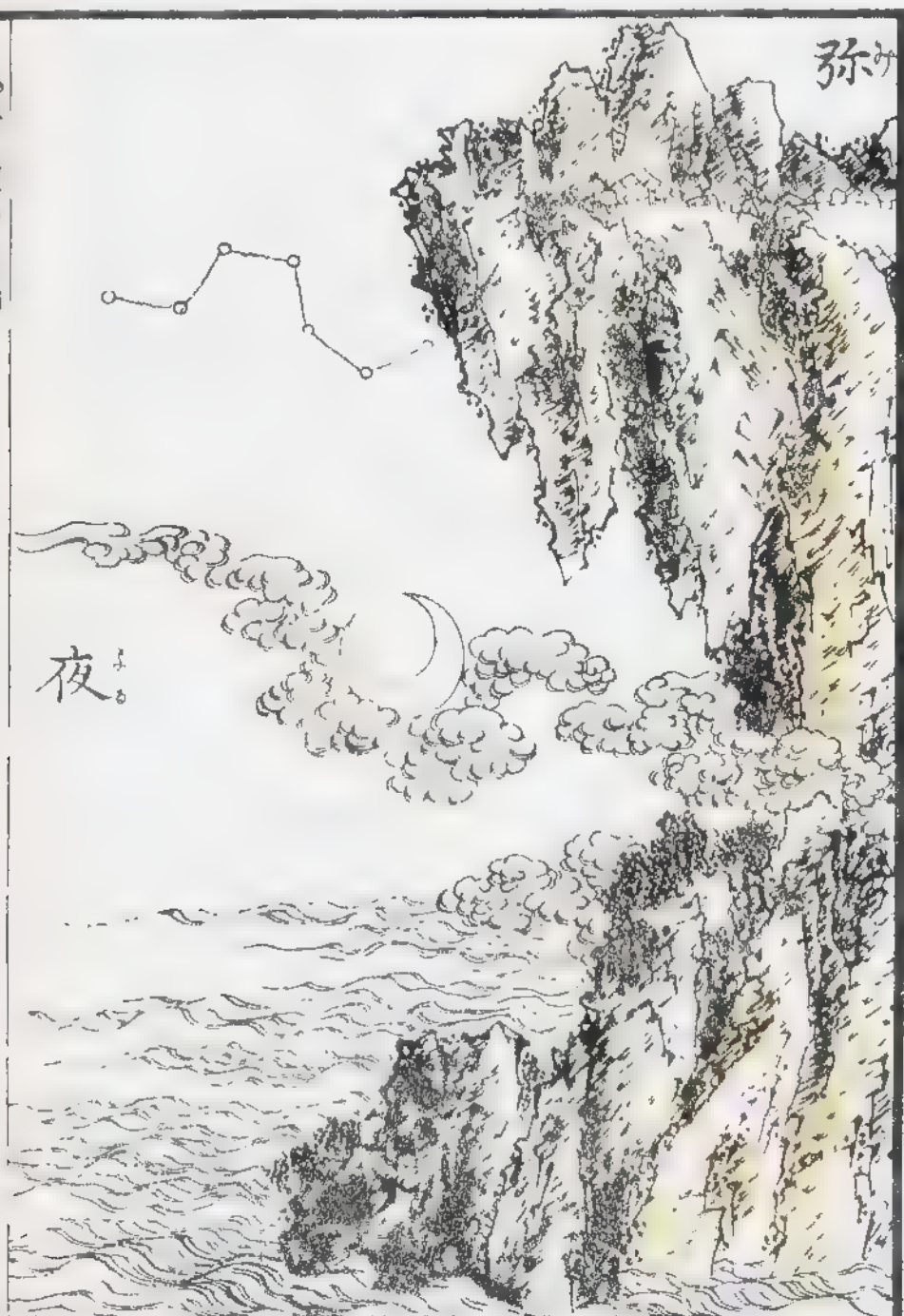
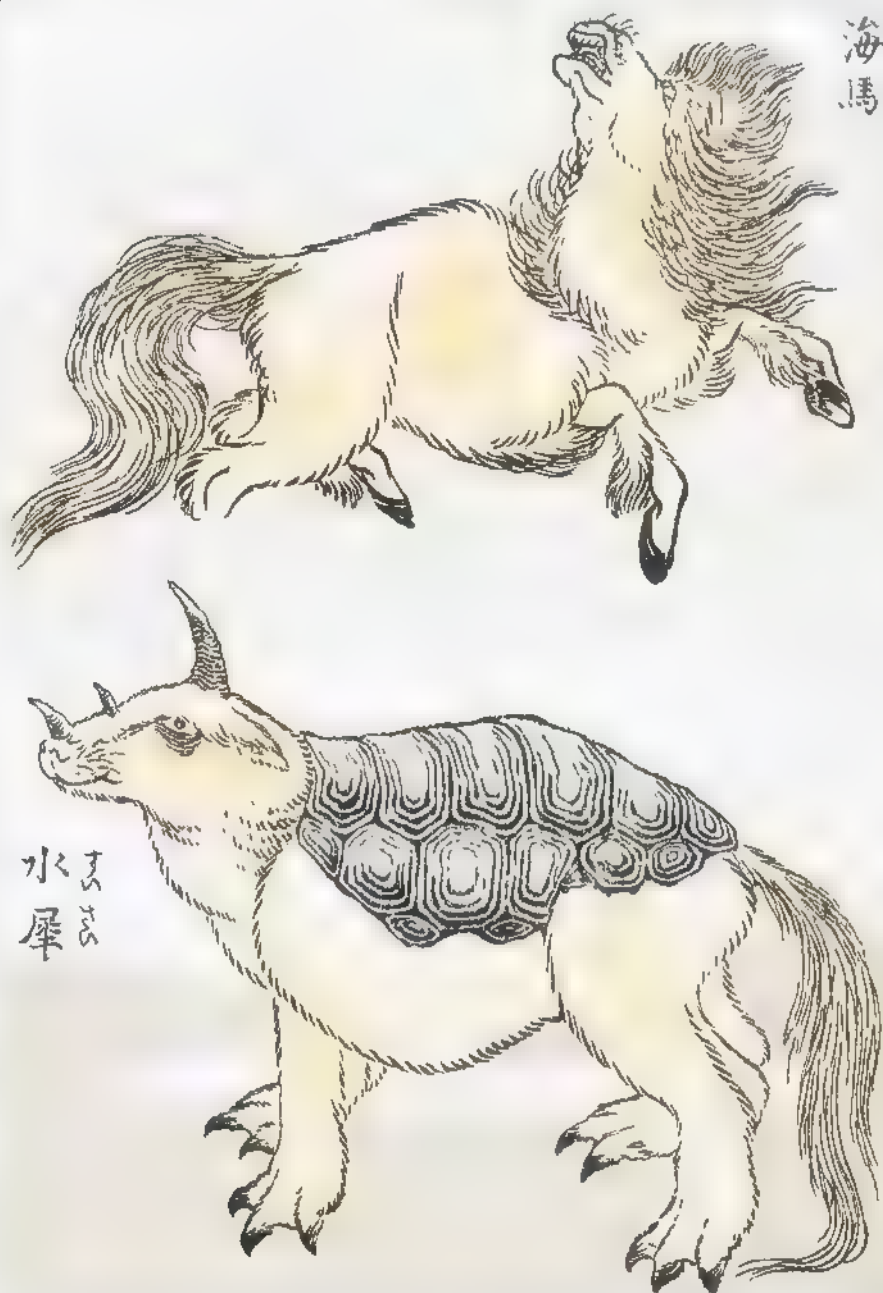


Plate 152. These beasts are the *kaiba*, or Oriental sea-horse, and the *suioi*, or water rhinoceros. The former animal has tempted the authors of bestiaries in all lands, for the creature is easy to explain, simple to draw, and entirely logical. If there are no horses of the sea, there ought to be. Hokusai's example is of the standard Oriental form. The rhinoceros, however, pre-

sents another problem. It is difficult to know whether Hokusai is trying to depict an actual rhinoceros from hearsay or is following Chinese accounts based partly on actual descriptions and partly on pure fable. Obviously he had never seen the real animal, but he must have heard, possibly from the strangers who had brought the camel to Japan, of the armored creature which in real life is a

good deal more preposterous than some of the inhabitants of the bestiaries. In any case, he catches the dominant features of an actual rhinoceros head fairly well, misses completely on the body and tail, and comes up with his customary talons for feet, producing a beast which would have done well as the *kinn* of Plate 40.



海馬
ういば

水犀
すゐぎ

Plate 153. Here Hokusai is at his affectionate best, for he is recording the simple technical facts of everyday Japanese life. From top to bottom and left to right he presents: 1) two men engaged in making twine; 2) two men making noodles, one treading the dough, enclosed in straw, with his feet and the other rolling it out on a board; 3) a self-satisfied customer posing while

a fortuneteller studies his physiognomy with a hand glass, 4) a seated man with a telescope; 5) an *o-megane-shi*, or lens-grinder, sitting beside his advertising box; and 6) a group of umbrella-makers, one finishing an umbrella, another cutting long bamboo ribs, and a boy mixing rice paste. The *Manga* contains many such sketches.



Plate 154. A page concerning wheels, both imaginative and practical. The fiery wheel, with a demon's head for its hub, whose caption might mean "Sundered wheel," is apparently a creation of Hokusai's own imagination; but the "Wind boat" to its right is vision-plus-reality. The umbrella characterized most early conceptions of a flying machine, but the *fusensha*, "wind fan

wheel," here seen attached to the side of the flying boat, was a specific Hokusai contribution to the ancient dream. This device had been used in ancient days by armies within a fortress to repel sappers who were attempting to subdue the fortress by an underground attack: the *fusensha* was whirled over the entrance to the tunnel and powdered lime blown underground, stifling the enemy.

Thought Hokusai: "Why not apply this principle to a boat? Maybe the boat would fly." Properly motored, a modification of the *fusensha* did achieve the flight Hokusai had foreseen; and then, aided by an umbrella-like concept, the flying boat became the helicopter.

Also shown. A crippled beggar propels himself in a cart. Three men haul a heavy load (continued on page 275)



Plate 155. Here Hokusai shows his art students how to save time in making certain commonly used designs. Top left: "To do this pattern without a form, draw a series of shumoku [the T-shaped Buddhist mallets shown in Plate 21] and make the corners touch." Top right: "As shown, draw a series of figure eights [written with two slanting verticals in Japanese] in the shape of arcs back

to back." This pattern is used on the kimono of Plate 177. Bottom left: "To do this pattern, draw it with a unit of three tortoise-shell designs." Bottom right: "To do the hemp-leaf pattern, start with a tortoise-shell hexagon and then fill it in as shown. To do a small chain pattern rapidly, do two wavy lines and have them meet."

In an earlier book Hokusai

had anticipated the cubists by demonstrating that all design is based upon the contrast between circles and squares.

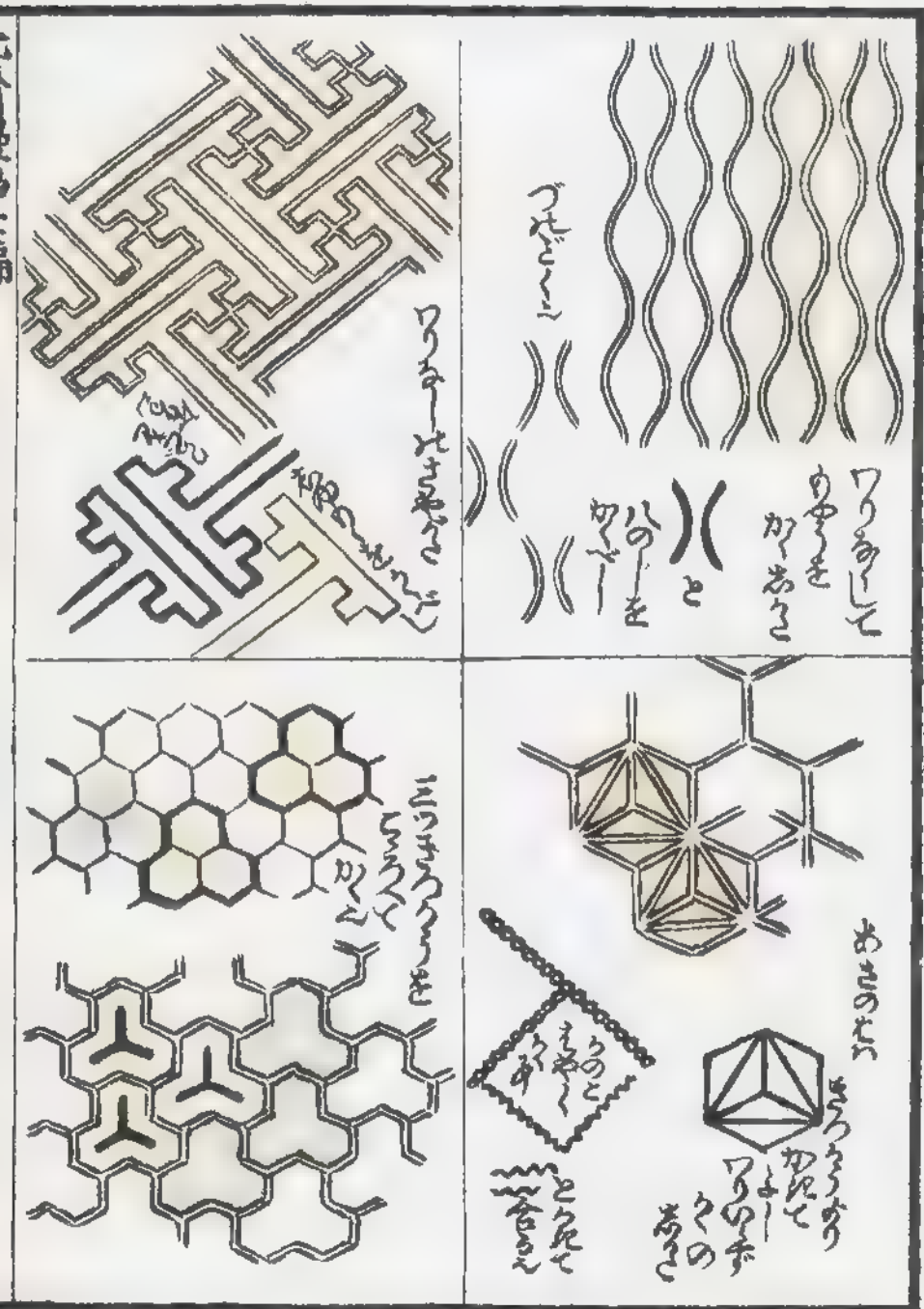
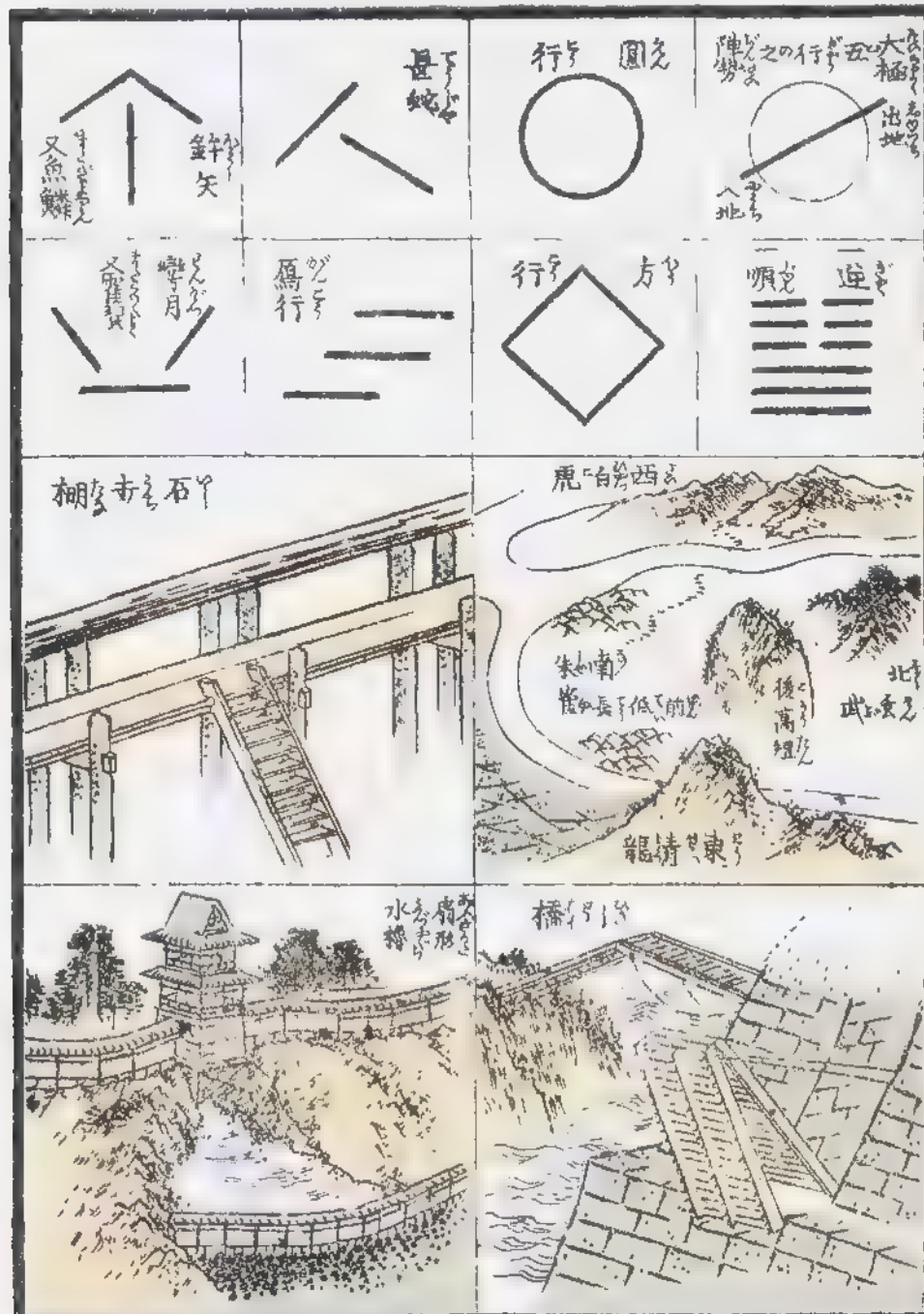


Plate 156. The *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, supposedly written by Wen Wang in the 12th century B.C., is one of the Five Classics of China and probably one of the most esoteric books ever written. Yet, as a book of divination, based upon arrangements of divided and undivided lines, it has had incalculable influence upon almost every phase of life in China, Korea, and Japan.

Here Hokusai suggests the application of forms derived from the *I Ching* to the practical matters of fortifications and military strategy. To one uninitiated in these esoteric mysteries, the various relationships, if any, of Hokusai's diagrams and sketches must remain obscure, and here I can do no more than give literal translations of the captions, reading left to right and top to bottom.

The diagrams: 1) "Arrow or fish scale." 2) "Long snake." 3) "Circular going." 4) "Entering ground" and "Leaving ground." This diagram also carries the big caption applicable to all the diagrams and, perhaps, to the sketches as well: "Fortifications of the Great Pole, five goings." 5) "Crescent moon or sparrow wings." 6) "Geese going." (continued on page 275)



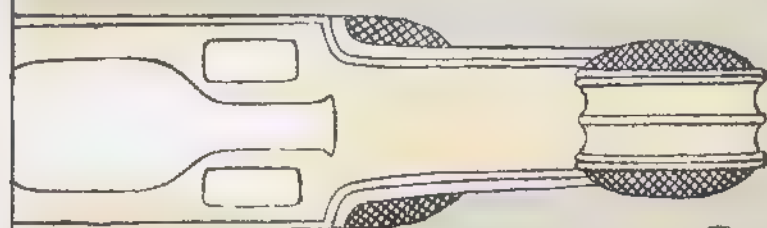
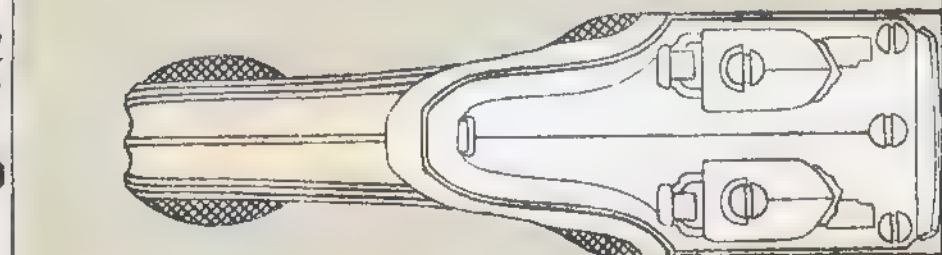
Plates 157-58. Hokusai was invariably fascinated by Western technology. In a famous later print, reportedly his last and done when he was 89, he shows a surveying company at work with transits. Here he reports on what was probably his first close study of a flint-lock pistol. If we use literal translations for the new verbal compounds which the Japanese were then devising to describe

new and unfamiliar objects—for such compounds were then still ringing with equal strangeness in Japanese ears—the title of this sketch, at the far right, becomes "Double-holed short fire-encaser." The captions on the upper drawing read: "Top view." "Fire gate [touchhole]." "Top of fire-striker [batteries]." On the small drawing mid-right: "Back view of fire-striker." On the full pistol

toward the bottom: "Side view." "Stone pincers [cocks]." "Stones [flints]." "Fire-striker." "Pulling metals [triggers]." On the two halves of pistols at the left: "Bottom view No. 2."

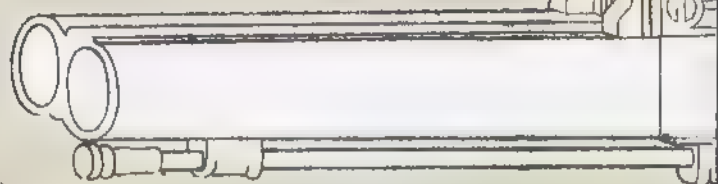
Where Hokusai saw this particular pistol, or from what country it came, we do not know, but in his day such weapons were becoming fairly common in Japan, some having been smuggled in by the Dutch

火銃の二面

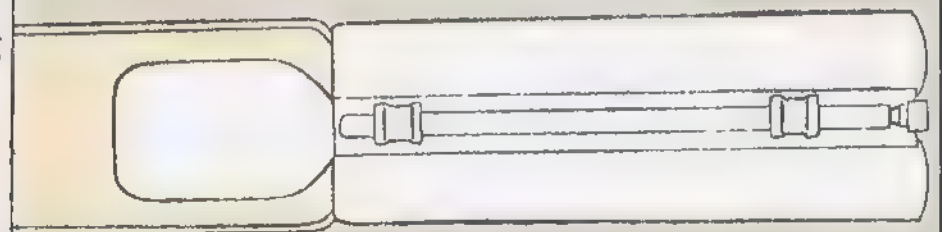


裡面之形

火銃側面

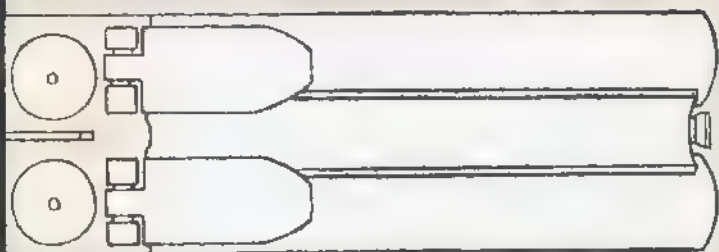


二面裡



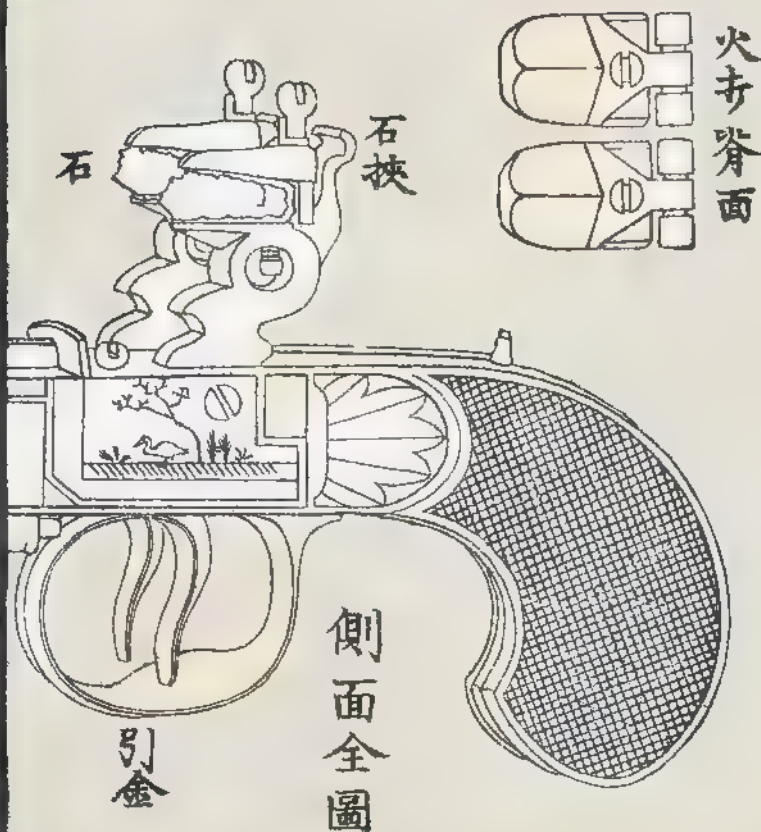
and Portuguese, others having been made by Japanese craftsmen. The Japanese-made pistols were often even more elaborately decorated than their Western counterparts.

火門 雙穴之短炮



雙穴之短炮

火門之形



側面全圖

引金

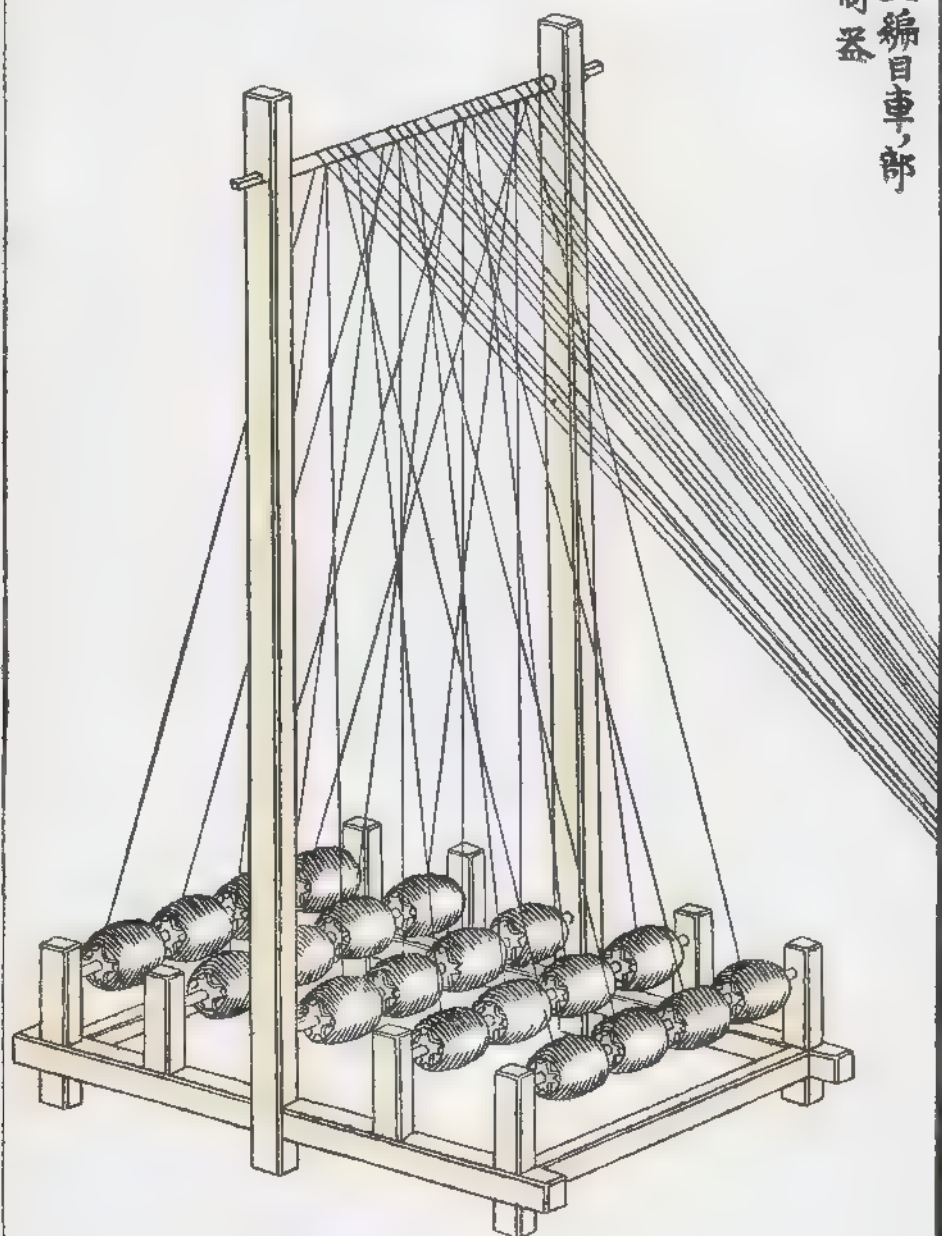
石挾

火門脊面

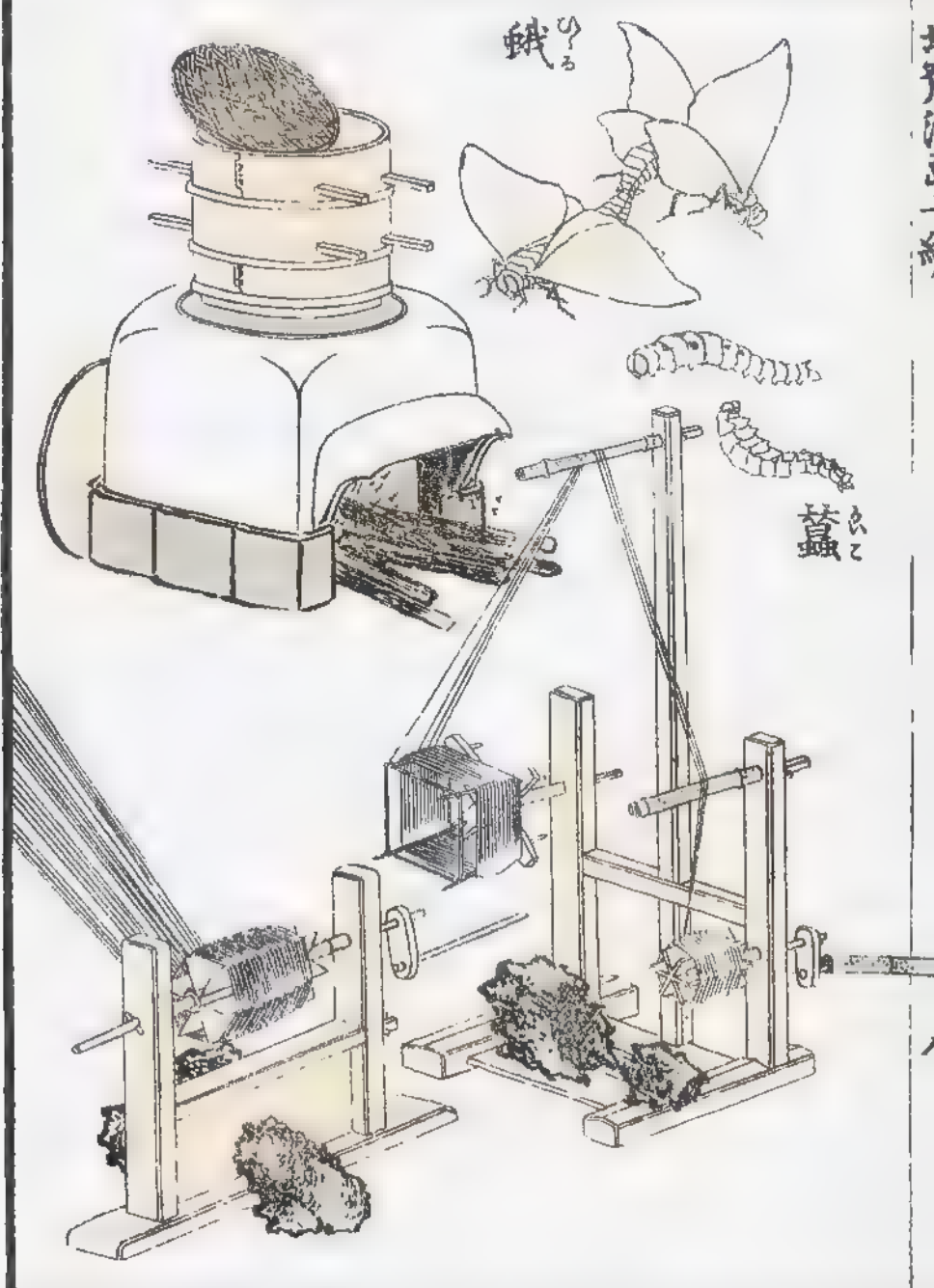
Plates 159-60. The captions on the right read, as might be expected, "Moths" and "Silkworms," but the one on the left is especially interesting in that it directs the reader to "See Volume II [of the *Manga*], the section on wheels," which is a reference to those pages reproduced as our Plates 147 and 154 and is evidently meant as a suggestion as to how this machinery could be powered.

In this sketch Hokusai presumably seeks to demonstrate how separate fibers of silk, after they have been wound singly onto twenty bobbins, can be fused into a single strand of silk thread, but the process shown would scarcely achieve that purpose. Neither would that shown in the operation of the smaller machine on the right. Therefore it has been suggested that what is here shown

is merely the cleaning and stretching of the fibers; but this seems hardly likely, since, once the threads got tangled onto the master bobbin, future untangling would be hopeless. What seems most likely is that Hokusai understood imperfectly what he was seeing and that he was interested only in the perspective and drawing problems involved.



二編目車部
同登



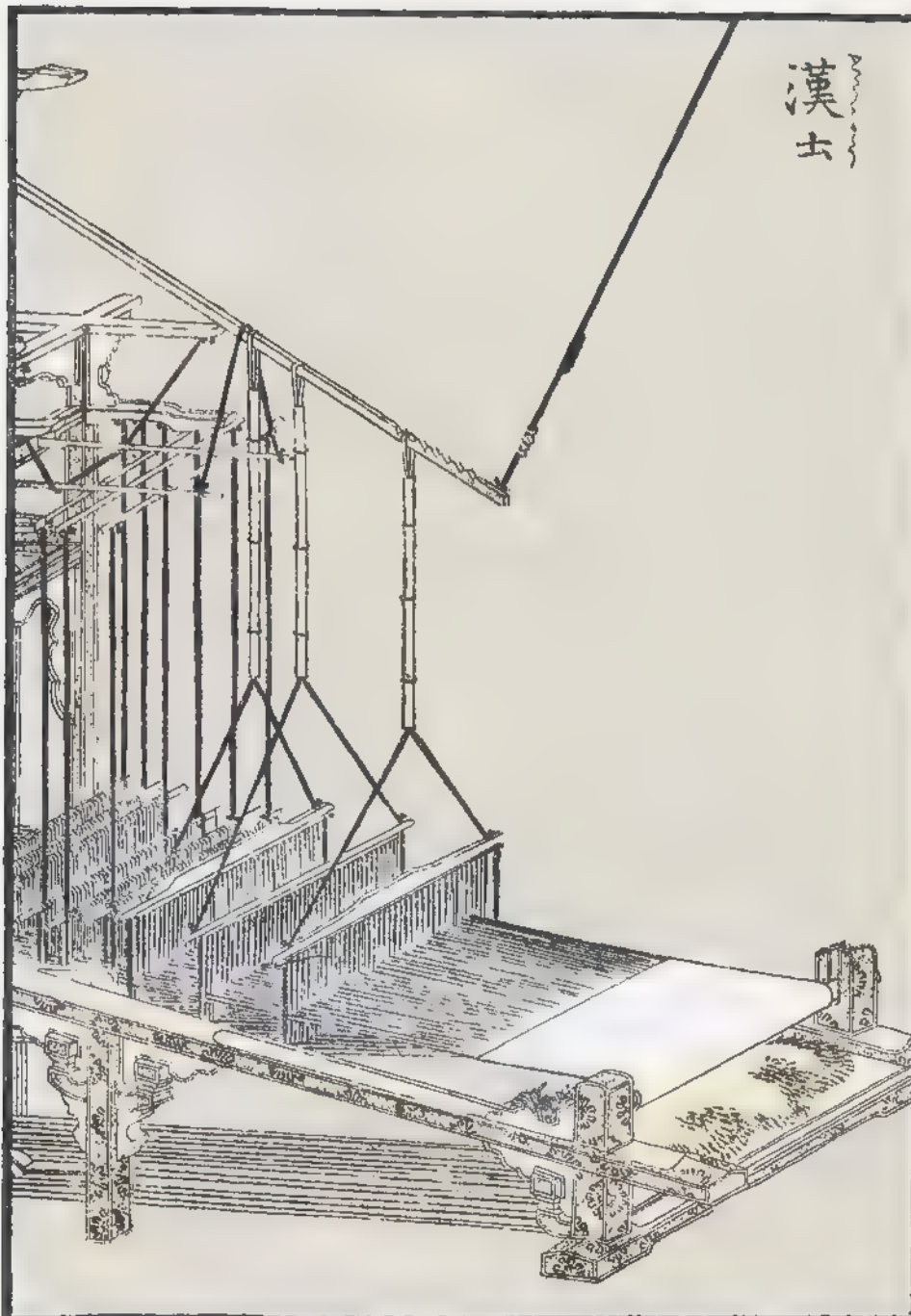
七
二編

3

VIII B-R



漢士



Plates 163-64. These sketches are notable examples of Hokusai's preoccupation with both foreign techniques and tales of foreign wanderers. They are still more important as unmistakable evidence that Hokusai had studied Western perspective, possibly with Shiba Kokan (1738-1818), the revolutionary investigator of many things and, under the name of Harushige, the blithe

forger of Harunobu color prints. Certainly, Hokusai, even if he did not actually study with Kokan, as some doubt, had studied Kokan's famous etchings in Western perspective, and it is equally certain that he had seen some of the foreign books then being copied and surreptitiously passed from hand to hand.

The captions for the upper print, reading from right to

left as Hokusai intended, are "The law of 3-way division: if the drawing is 3 sun in height [1 sun equals something over 1 inch], make the sky 2 sun and the earth 1 sun, as shown here." The caption on the left half reads: "Draw the lines after the basic pattern [at the right] like this." As might be expected, the character by each tree reads just that, "Tree," and serves to draw



attention to the manner in which a tree at a distance should be drawn smaller. Caption on top of the windows: "If a window is 9 bu wide [10 bu equal 1 sun], render it 3 bu [in width along the side of the building]." Caption at the base of the building: "3 bu, 1 bu." Observe also the Western men and the foreign ship.

Hokusai's studies of Negroes were unquestionably

done from stories he had picked up, whether at first or second hand, from foreign sailors. The bow shown here was not used in Japan (compare with that of Plate 32). The xylophone had probably already reached Japan from Malaya via China, but was still enough of an exotic mystery to be appropriate for Hokusai's uses here. The tree was possibly Hokusai's version of

cactus. And the glowing plateful of round objects may refer to the prevalence of gold in alien lands. The supposed Negroes look like blackened Japanese peasants, but the dog—for once looking something like a dog—may have been an escapee from some foreign ship, or the copy of a specimen from a Dutch book.

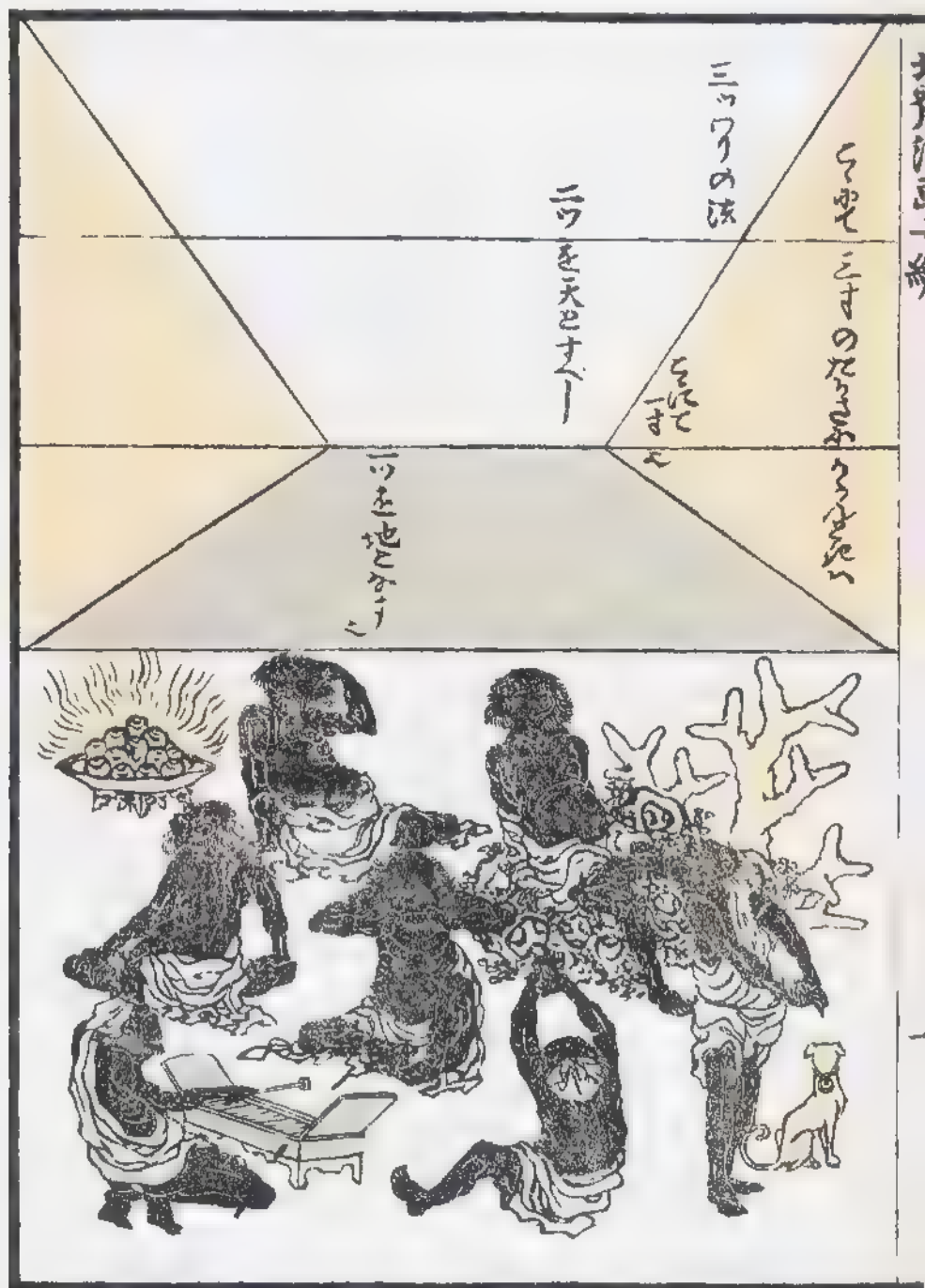
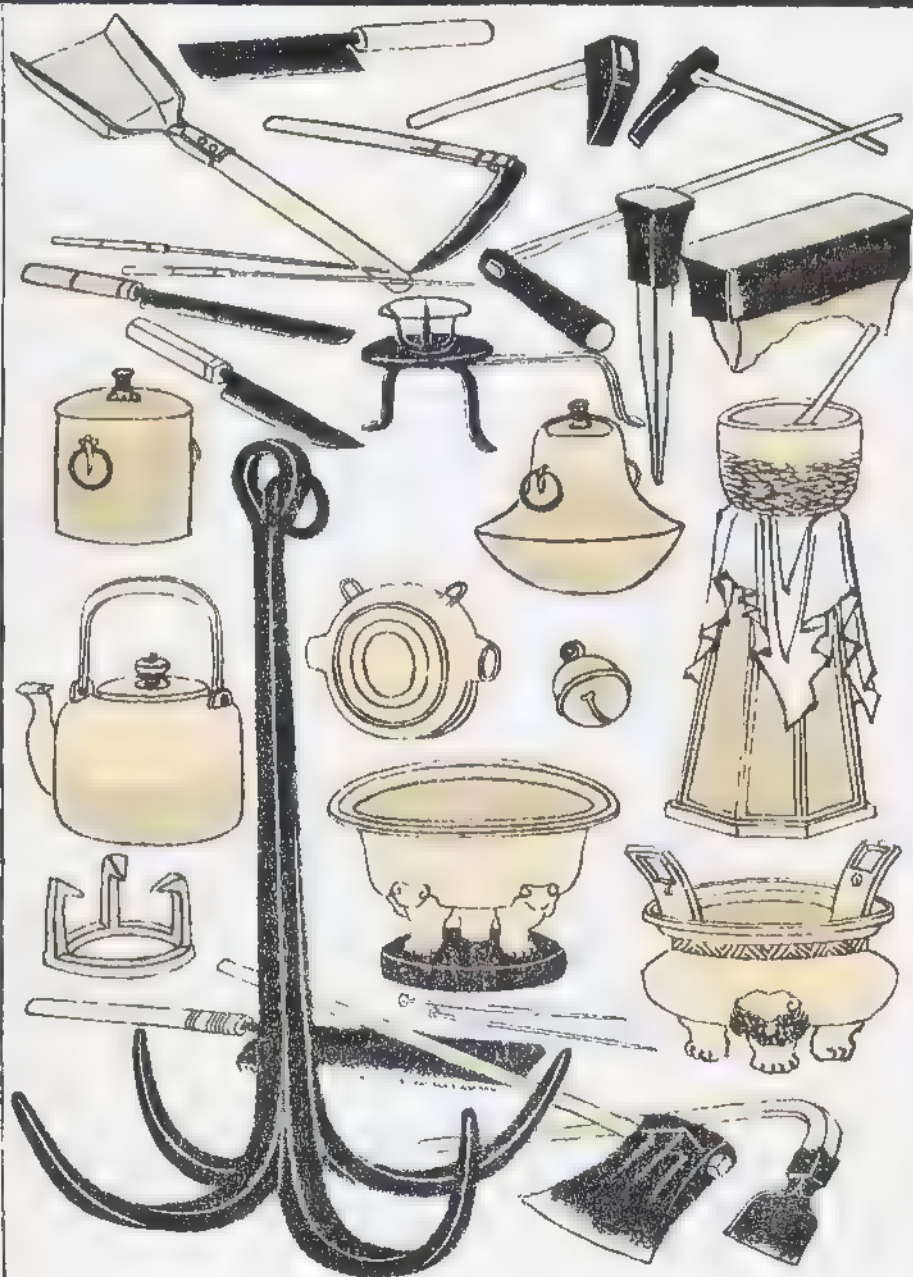


Plate 165. No better sketch could be found to close this section than this, for once more it shows Hokusai reporting on the everyday life of his people. Shown here in jumbled array are a wooden-handled scoop and metal chopsticks used for carrying embers; a candle-holder; long-handled hammers for beating red-hot metal; an *onri*; a tall stand with a bowl of water on a towel, placed be-

side toilets and used for hand-washing; a teakettle; a small bell; an ax; a grubbing hoe; a square-sided saw with wooden handle; and an anchor. The containers in the center with rings and lids are used to boil water for tea. The round objects with three legs are the *hibachi*, or charcoal braziers, here more ornamental than would be common today. Along the left margin sits a

three-pronged *gotoku*, or trivet, which, when planted in the ashes of the *hibachi*, supports a cooking pot.



ARCHITECTURE



FOR TWO reasons Hokusai's architectural sketches merit a separate category within his technical plates. First, the nation of Japan was interested in architecture, and highly skilled therein, so that Hokusai was able to start from a more advanced base than the ones he had to depend upon for his other scientific inquiries. Second, his observation and accomplishment in this field surpassed what he attained in those other technical areas.

For these reasons, I have always found Hokusai's *Manga* sketches of architectural subjects among the most pleasing. He drew with clarity, organized with beauty, and reported with affection. His plates on fences which surround gardens are exquisite gems, while his rambling portraits of little villages lighted by the setting moon are instinct with Japanese poetry. His eye for detail produces fine workmanship in those plates which deal strictly with architectural patterns, and his entire sense of what goes into the building of a house is impeccable.

I must admit that perhaps I assess these sketches too highly because of personal reasons: my own reaction to Japanese architecture closely resembles Hokusai's. I find the private Japanese house an accomplishment of great beauty, from the handsome quality of the plain, polished wood to the general design, which yields spaciousness and low, clean lines. The proportions of a typical Japanese house are unusually satisfying; its uncluttered quality is refreshing after the hodgepodge homes with which one is normally acquainted in the West, particularly if those homes are marked by German rococo taste, as are so many in the part of America in which I live.

I also like the Shinto shrine architecture, with which Hokusai appears to have been so preoccupied. These gaunt wooden structures, handsomely proportioned and tiled or thatched resplendently, fit securely into their landscapes and seem to illustrate the shamanistic genesis of Japan's basic religion; they are part of the Japanese soil.

Hokusai's architectural drawings fit logically into the pattern of his general artistic development, and a main reason why we enjoy these plates is that Hokusai's major weakness, particularism, here becomes an asset, for throughout art history the depiction of architectural design has usually been



done in a piece-by-piece tradition rather than in an impressionistic manner. Thus, Hokusai's patient drawing of a crossbeam, giving full attention to each segment, strikes us as appropriate, for that is how architectural drawings are done, so that a style which prevented the artist from drawing birds well did produce good pictures of buildings. For this reason some of his best work reminds one of Charles Meryon.

But an architectural drawing, to be satisfying, must have a second characteristic: it must express the building's relationship to the land upon which it stands, or the natural forces within which it exists. Here again Hokusai is admirably suited for the job, for his preoccupation with landscape enables him to place his buildings within their logical surroundings, so that his structures always seem appropriately rooted.

Thus he begins any architectural drawing by handling it exactly as he would a bird or a rock. It is a disparate thing to be studied, particularized, and drawn; and if he had not gone beyond this particularism, his architectural plates would still be satisfying. But in many instances he does go further; he establishes his building within its natural milieu, thus lending it additional meaning and form. Of course, he was fortunate in that one of the major characteristics of Japanese architecture is the manner in which it does accommodate itself to surrounding terrain, and perhaps we Westerners enjoy Hokusai's drawing of houses not because of their satisfying art, but rather because we like Japanese houses and the way they fit inconspicuously into their landscapes, whereas our homes often do not.

Yet events in Hokusai's private life raise real doubt as to what he thought of houses. As has been cited earlier, he lived in a succession of ninety-three different ones, usually in utter filth and confusion. He allowed several of them to burn down; the rest he abandoned with all contents. Certainly he lacked the sentimental American or British attitude toward home as an inviolable sanctuary; yet he displayed an acute sense of what a house ought to look like.

Scientifically, Hokusai's architectural drawings induce tempting speculation, for in this field alone does he equal in scientific observation and content the best comparable work of Leonardo. Yet this was precisely the field in



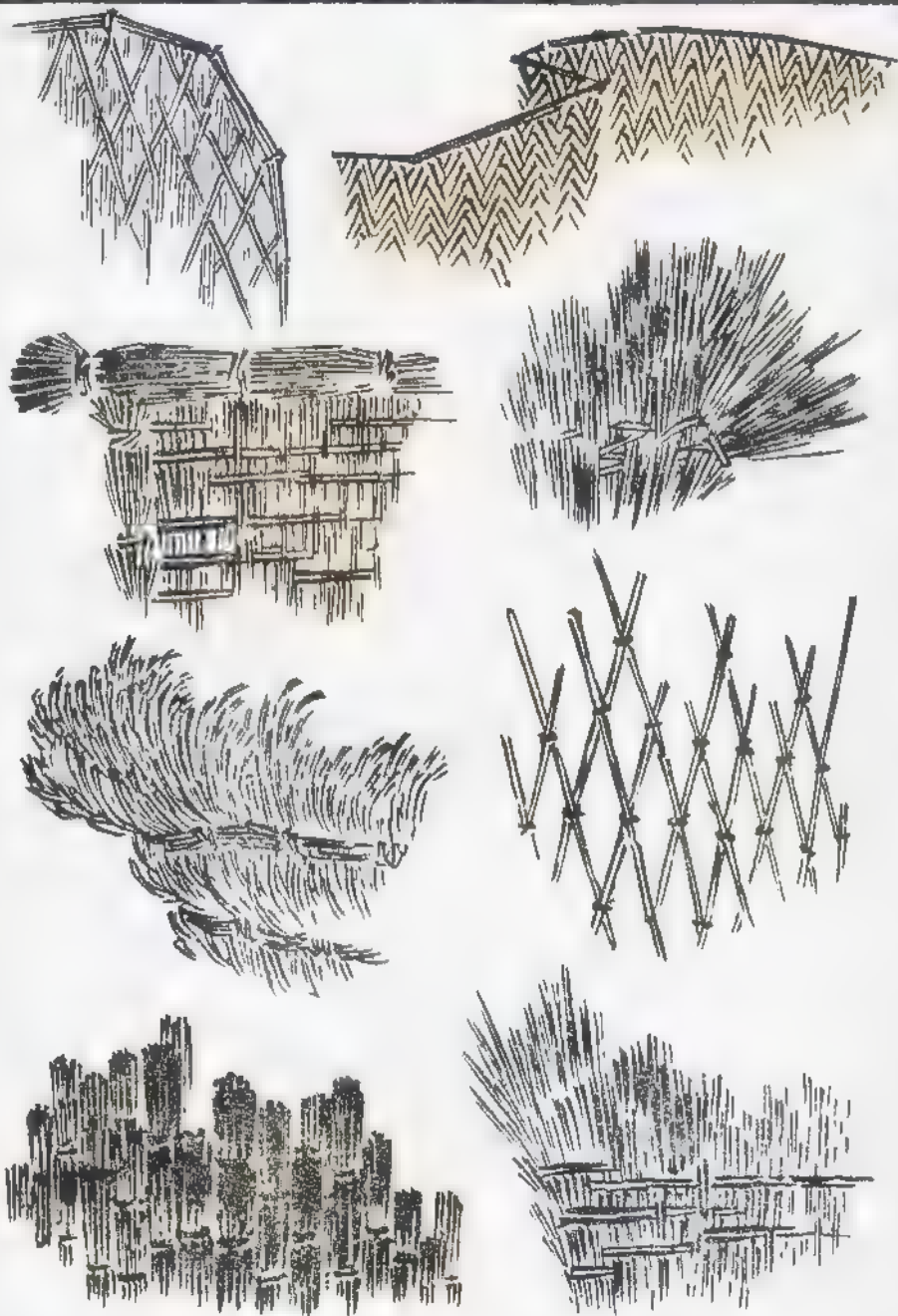
which Japanese technology was most advanced. In other words, when Japanese science permitted Hokusai to start from a platform roughly equal to Leonardo's, he performed as well as Leonardo. What might he have accomplished had the climate of Japanese opinion been as conducive to real scientific investigation as was the climate of Renaissance Florence?

Artistically, these sketches are most pleasing. They lack the magnificence of Piranesi or Hubert Robert, but they share the rural warmth of Constable. This, of course, is faint praise, because architectural drawings and paintings are, I am afraid, rather boring forms of art, and excellence in constructing them adds little to an artist's stature. The great bulk of Saenredam's work is dull and not worth one good head by Frans Hals, while the antiseptic austerities of Maurice Utrillo have been considerably overrated. When I say that I find Hokusai's work in this field pleasurable, I am not, strictly speaking, commenting on art but merely upon my affection for Japanese architecture.

Therefore, in offering the following selection of sketches, which I like very much, I am doing so not to enhance Hokusai's artistic reputation, for a plethora of such sketches would never tell us whether their author was an artist or not. They do prove, however, that Hokusai could draw the sort of picture that passed for art in European etching circles during much of the last century.

Plate 166. With this marvelous sketch of bamboo and brushwood fences we start our study of Hokusai's architectural sketches. To me this plate is completely satisfying, an authentic touch of the understanding man who enjoyed signing his name 'Hokusai, the Peasant.' I hope that in some way my words convey to the reader the joy I find in such sketches, even as this sketch

eloquently suggests the infinite attention Japanese gardeners give to such simple objects as fences, creating a rich variety of types for every taste and use.



北斎
五
十
八
繪

Plate 167. This simple presentation of how houses and fences should look by moonlight provides an excellent example of what the writer of the preface to Volume IV meant when he said that in this volume Hokusai suddenly switched from the harder outlines of classical style to the so, or cursive, style. Here, in Volume IV, the lines are freer, the brushwork solidier, and the

contrast between mass and open space more dramatic than in preceding volumes.

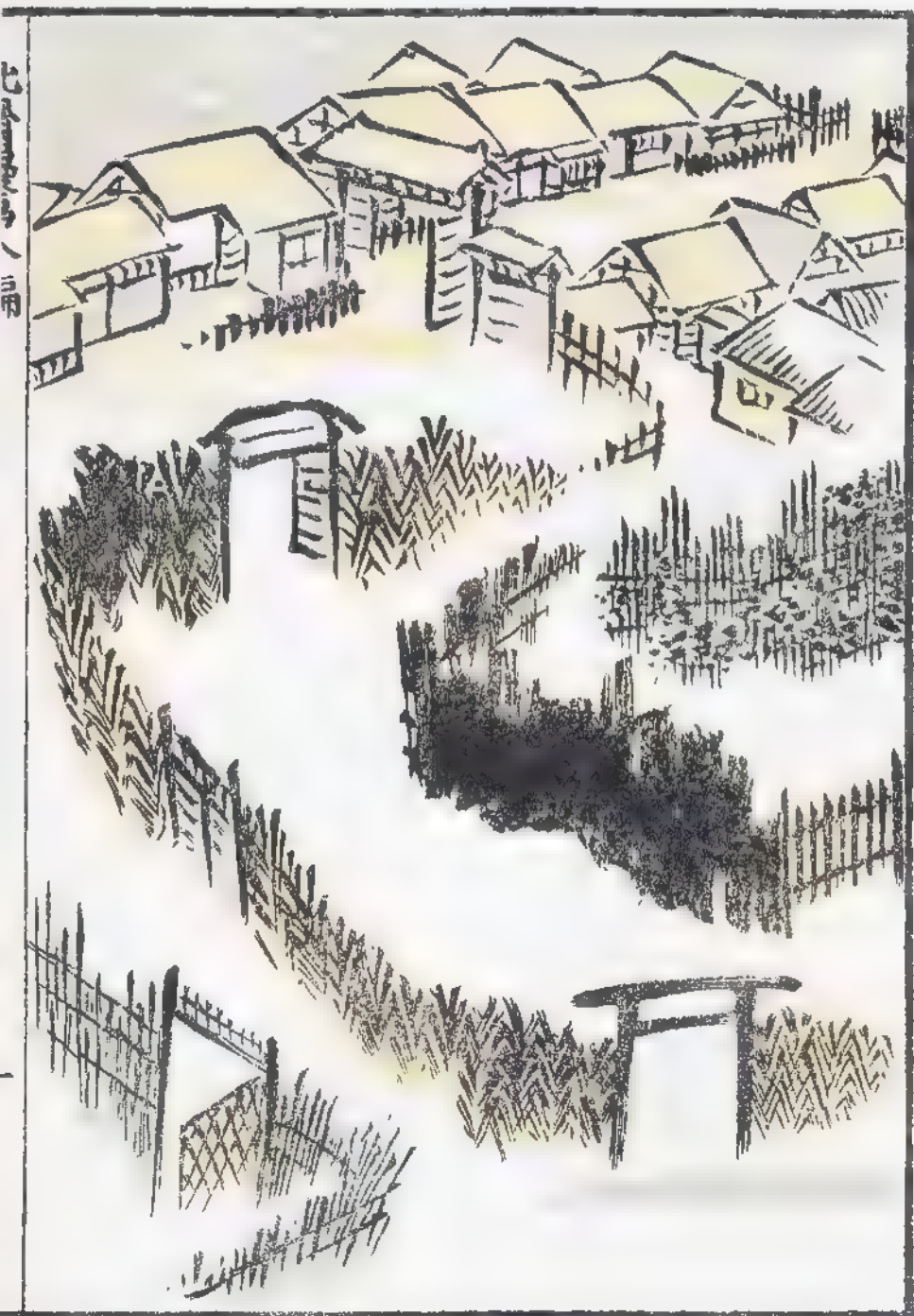


Plate 168. This is a study, in an earlier style, of various types of roofs: rough-thatched, shingled, tiled, and matted-thatched. Various fencing styles are also portrayed, plus interesting architectural details in the design of roofs and their construction. This is also a good stopping point for the reader to contemplate two questions: "Did Hokusai draw each of these houses appear-

ing in Volume I, or did his drawing companions? Who arranged them on the page in this manner?"

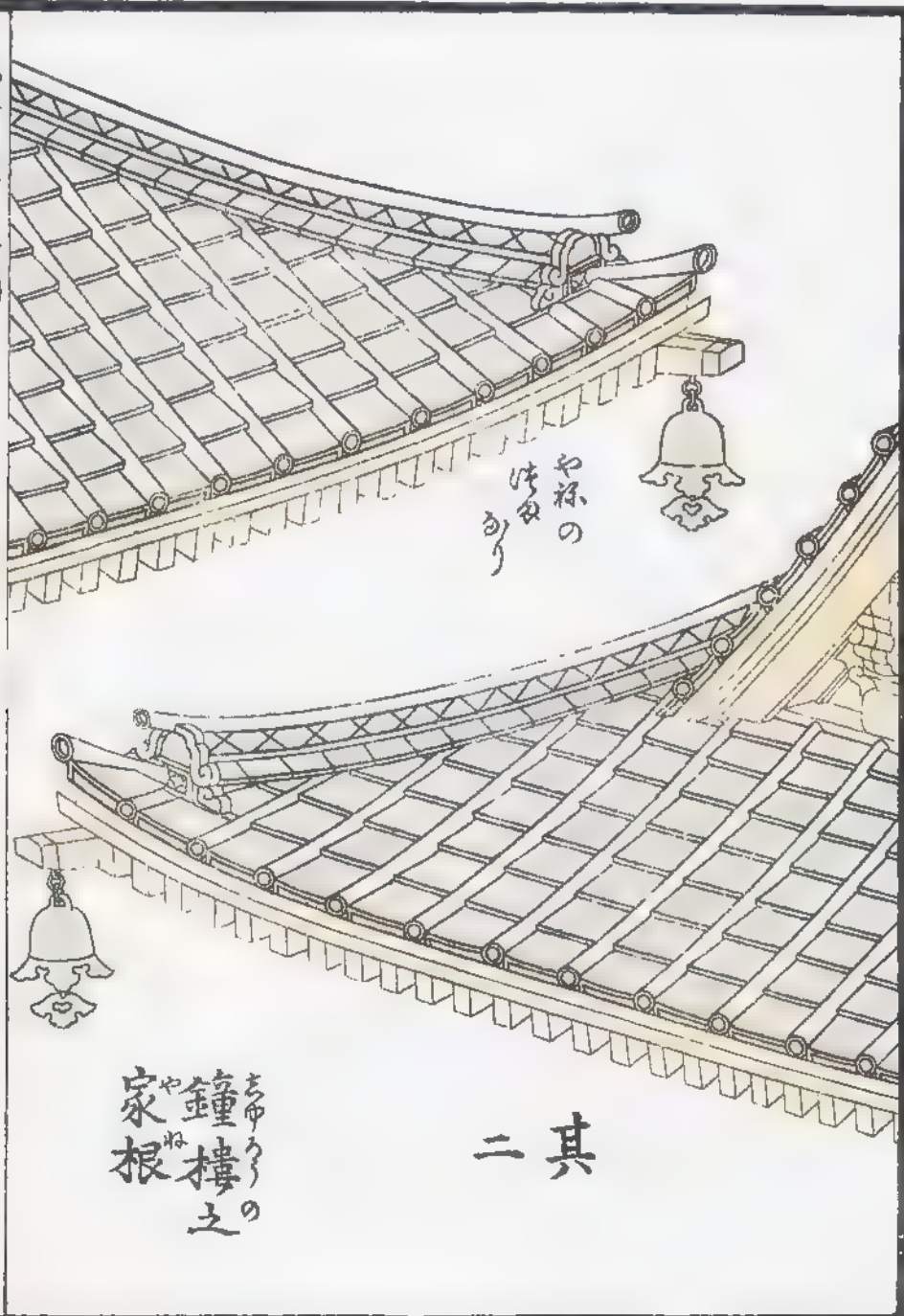


Plates 169-70. This sketch shows the lovely and intricate patterns produced by the tiles and ridgepoles of temple buildings. The ornamental devices hanging from each corner of the roof are bells, traditional on many Buddhist temple buildings. It is interesting to note that the contemporary woodblock artist Jun ichiro Seko (born 1914) has composed a handsome modern color print

exclusively from patterns of tiled roofs, catching the rich variety of designs that can be spotted from any second-story window in Japan.

As the Japanese language makes no distinction between singular and plural, it is difficult to know whether the caption for this should be translated "Belfry roof" or "Belfry roofs." Obviously the portion shown at the upper left is nothing but

a continuation of the right-hand side of the larger roof, but this portion bears the surprising caption "Roof's underside." It is interesting to speculate that perhaps Hokusai drew but a single, continuous roof; that the woodcarver broke this up as we see it in order to fit it on the page as large as possible; and that the publisher, in the way publishers sometimes have, tried to make the sketch



even more meaningful by adding the secondary caption. Yet a third caption reads 'Number 2,' a reference to the fact that in Volume V this sketch follows a view of the lower part of the belfry, half of which is shown in Plate 175.

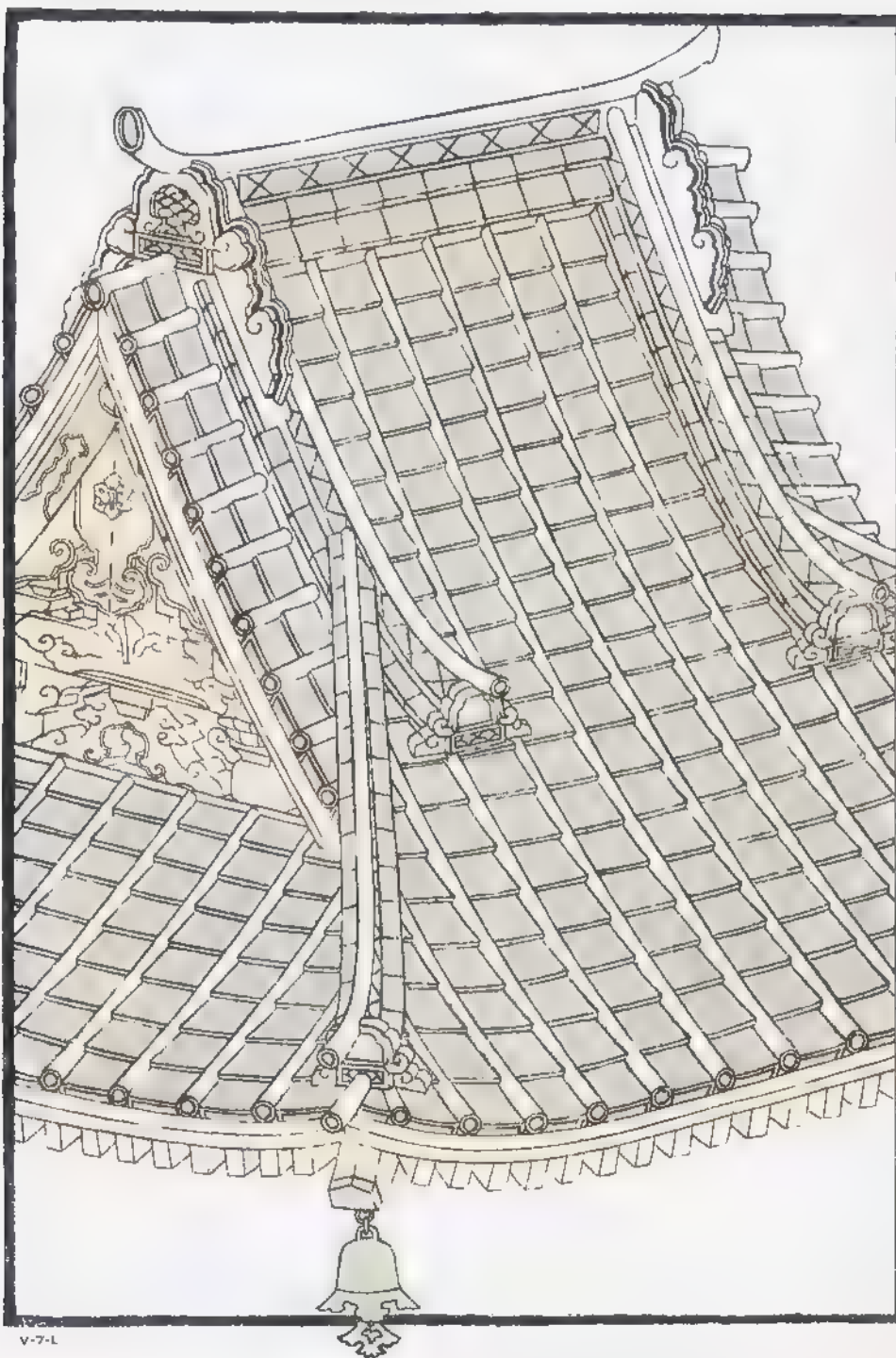


Plate 171. These sketches show how rocks can be used in making a garden, and although the finished plate is very un-Japanese in its grotesque overcrowding, the various elements are interesting. From top to bottom, two ways of using rocks to make a well are shown; two short bridges, one of natural rock, one of cut; two different styles of the stone lanterns which help make Japanese gar-

dens so lovely; the use of rocks to line a stream bank; a rock basin for washing the hands; an ornate stone bridge; a memorial stone; the buttressing of an earthen wall; and, lower right, the artistic placement of a single beautiful rock. As explained elsewhere, both natural and shaped rocks form one of the most important elements in Japanese garden design.

It seems to me that Hokusai's use of stipple to indicate rocks was one of his most unfortunate conventions, since it produces unsatisfactory forms which neither look like rocks nor please the eye.

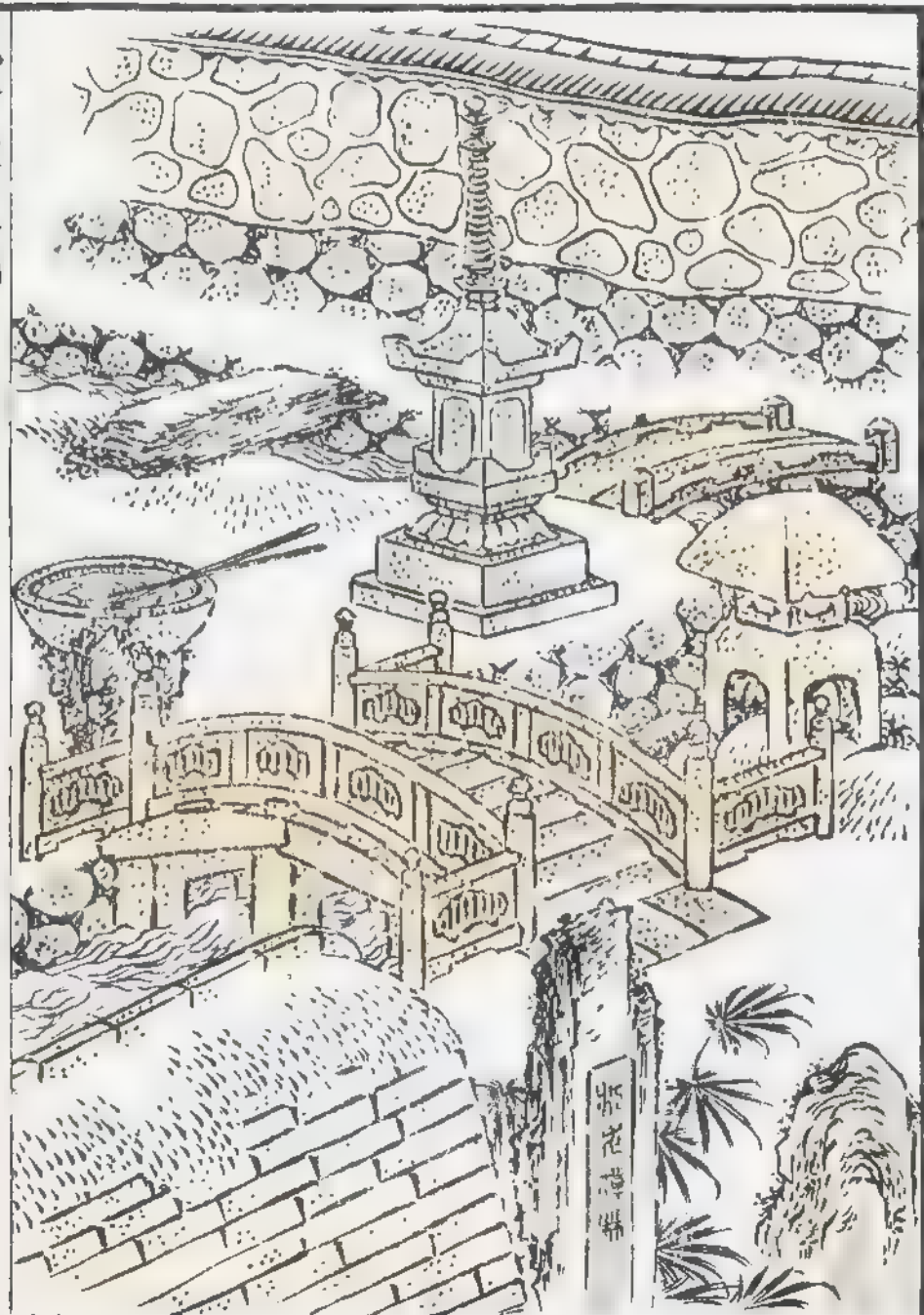


Plate 172. The length of this explanation makes it a rarity in the *Manga*. It is titled: "What Should Be Kept in Mind When Drawing Temples and Shrines." Then, in the accompanying text, Hokusai states that too often artists merely copy the drawings of the ancients without any sound foundation and seem not to fear that in doing so they may be copying the errors the an-

cients themselves may have committed. Such so-called artists, one might say, are capable of studying only the ancients and not the art of drawing itself. It is a simple task to draw temples and shrines if one keeps in mind the proportions derived from the *eki* (signs of divination) of the *I Ching* and applies them when selecting the proportions of the forms to be drawn.

Proportions of 2 derive from the male and female principles, Yang and Yin; of 3, from the sun, moon, and stars; 4, the four seasons; 5, the five elements of water, gold, earth, fire, and wood; 7, the Seven Stars; 8, the eight points of the Chinese compass; and of 9, from the Nine Stars.

Then Hokusai draws a torii to illustrate how easy the job (continued on page 275)

宮室をかくる事

通家の流く其秘なる事ありて漫説するを

せざるは尺寸の相違をおきて古人の

足跡をみよくするをせざるは滴も形を必

よりといふもその蜜画して俗眼を悦む

あり己が不知の妄を座へ只臨本をかり

て古人のあやまるを我上ふりて後世の

穢をあらざるの族画を学ぶごとく古人を

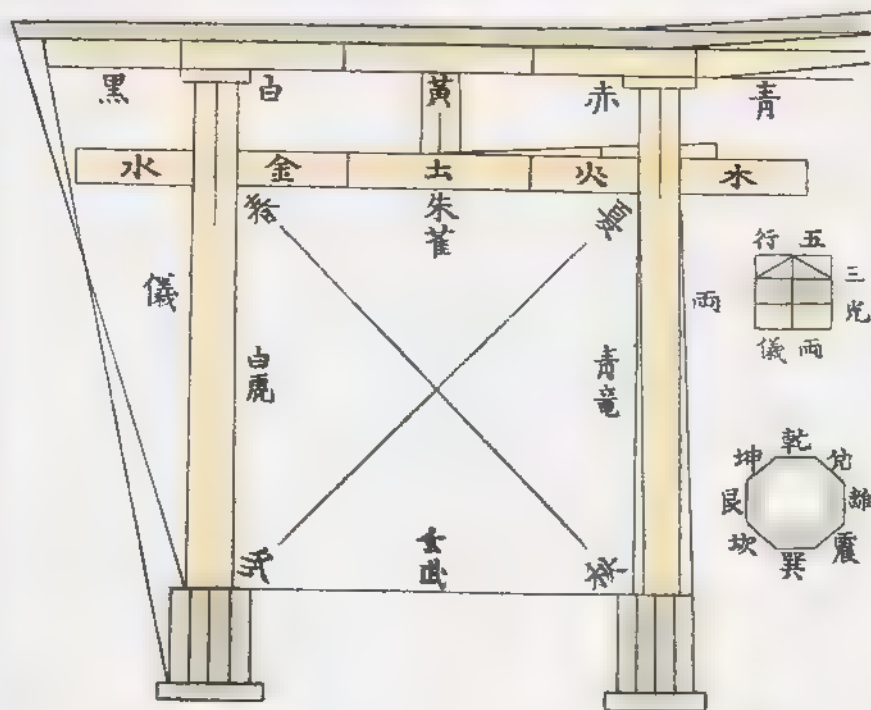
まねるべしといふべし

二 兩儀 日月星 四季 五行

七 星 八 課 九 曜

この數を眼前の形其長短ふりて考へ

とまらぬ宮殿樓閣といへども画の安らぐ



Plates 173-74. Not even in architecture could Hokusai avoid the rich, tangled fabric of legend that envelops his land. Here he gives us the traditional story of how two gods invented the first Japanese roof. The man is Otonochi no Mikoto, the "fifth male deity" of prehistoric Japan, shown with his helpmeet, Otomabe no Mikoto, the "fifth female deity." Wearing

clothes made of leaves and straw, Otonochi weaves rope with the help of his left foot, while Otomabe prepares to tie beams into position. Thatch and additional bamboo beams lie behind her.

The caption upper right reads: "Origin of *chigi* and *katsuogi*." The former are the handsome capital-X effects that distinguish Shinto roofs, resulting, as can be seen here,

from the crossed extensions of the main vertical beams. *Katsuagi*, not shown here, are the short horizontal beams, now decorative only, which were originally placed across the ridgepole between the *chigi* to give the roof weight against typhoons. As is so often the case with ancient matters, scholars have suggested sexual overtones in this legend concerning the origin of the

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四



VIII 3 R

Japanese roof, identifying the *chigi* with the female organ and the *katsuogi*-decorated ridgepole with the male. Unfortunately, I have not been able to discover exactly what the two "fifth deities" did to justify such symbolism, so I must rely, confidently, upon the reader's imagination.

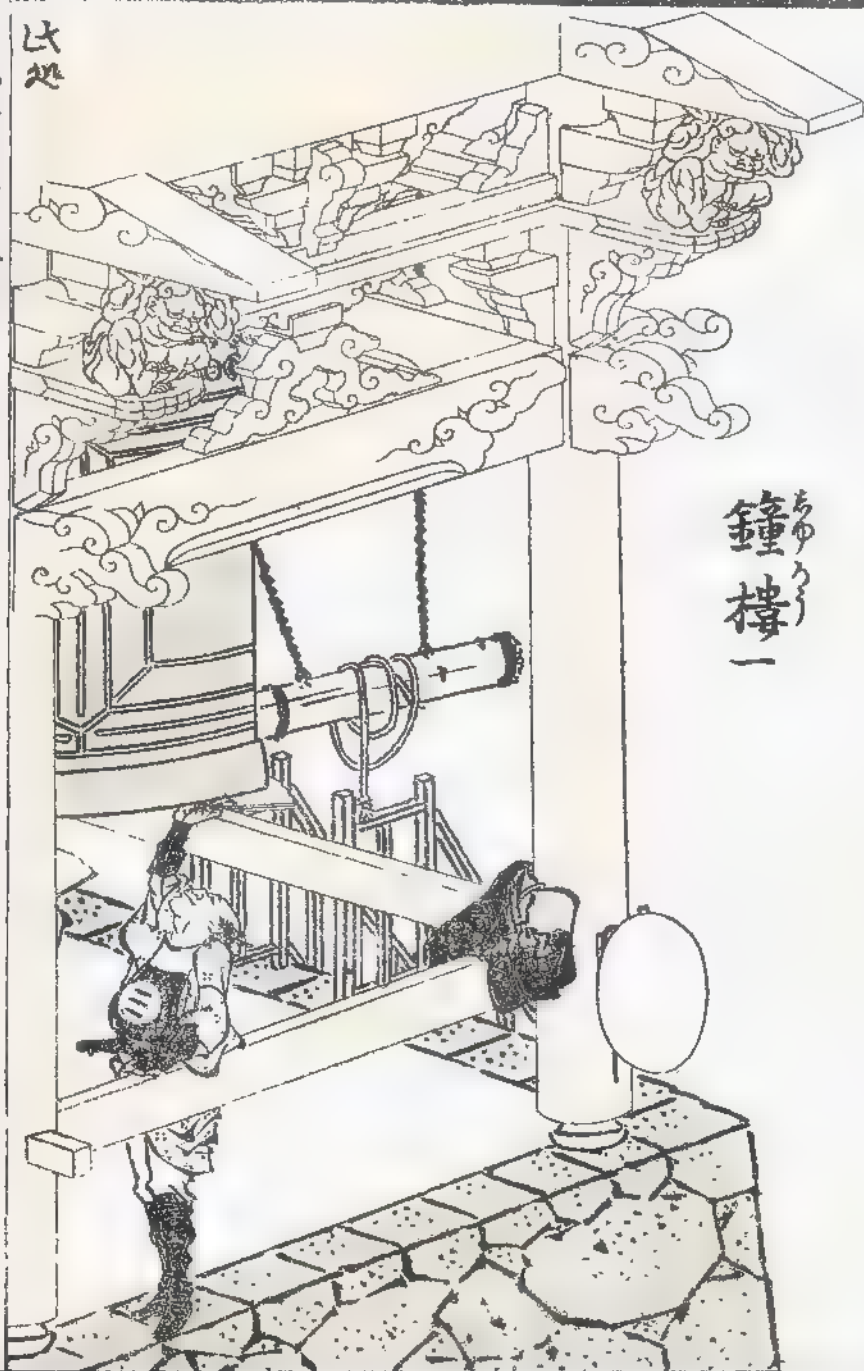
A finished Shinto roof, complete with *katsuogi*, may be seen in Plate 168.



Plate 175. "Belfry, Number 1." (Plates 169-70 show the roof.) Observe the ornate carving which characterizes many Japanese temples, and the curious manner in which the pillars supporting the roof rest upon the stonework without being imbedded in it. The great bronze bell, always with straight, non-flaring sides as shown here, is rung not with a clapper but by hauling the

suspended parallel beam far to the right, then pulling it with a mighty thrust so that one end crashes into the bell, which yields a throbbing, mournful sound. On New Year's Eve, large congregations gather for ceremonial bell-ringing. Leading citizens are invited each to ring one peal of the traditional 108, representing the 108 temptations which in Buddhist iconography are per-

sonified as evil spirits like those of Plate 145. Most guests make a mess of it; some do not even cause the bell to sound, for handling the heavy beam is difficult; but they all acquire great merit for the coming year.



FORERUNNERS



ONE OF the most pleasant ways in which a student acquainted with Hokusai's general work can spend an hour is to leaf through the *Manga* identifying those sketches which later formed the bases for famous color prints. This game yields surprising results, for often, when it seems as if nothing on a given page was later used, one's eye, almost at rest, will catch upon some trivial incident which Hokusai used either as a significant part of some print or as the organizing motif for an entire print. And as one becomes more expert in his knowledge of the prints, so he becomes more adept in picking out precedents in the *Manga*.

For example, in the first page of sketches reproduced in this section, Plate 176, even the most untutored eye will find, in the smiling barrel-maker, one of Hokusai's happiest inventions. Later, skewed around at a better angle, this workman will frame in his circle of staves the mighty Fuji and will help produce one of the warmest and best-loved prints in the majestic *Fuji* series.

For years, when I studied this particular page of the *Manga*, I saw nothing but this happy precursor; but now when I look at the page I see primarily the young woman at the lower left. She is holding her garments high over her stomach, has her be-pinned head cocked to one side, and walks gingerly along on high-platformed shoes. She is an *oiran*, a high-ranking courtesan, as proclaimed by her obi tied stiffly in front, and she is probably hurrying through some Yoshiwara alley on her way to an appointment in a tearoom, where a wealthy customer waits. But what makes her memorable is the fact that later Hokusai was to adapt this hurried drawing into one of his most delightful prints. It isn't particularly famous, nor were many copies struck off; for the last ten years I have tried to find an example for sale, and have never seen even a ruined specimen. Yet it remains an utterly captivating human document, a print from which the very essence of Hokusai cries to fellow human beings. For in his print, as contrasted to this present sketch, he has made our thrifty little *oiran* somewhat taller, somewhat looser jointed, and very tipsy. She staggers along, her back to the world's view, sniffing at her upper lip and just managing to stay afloat. She is utterly winsome, utterly delightful, a lurching little girl whom all the



world loves the moment it sees her. She was born in Hokusai's mind one night while he was on a roistering Yoshiwara tour, but her way station, her resting point before her entrance onto the print, was in this crowded corner of the *Manga*.

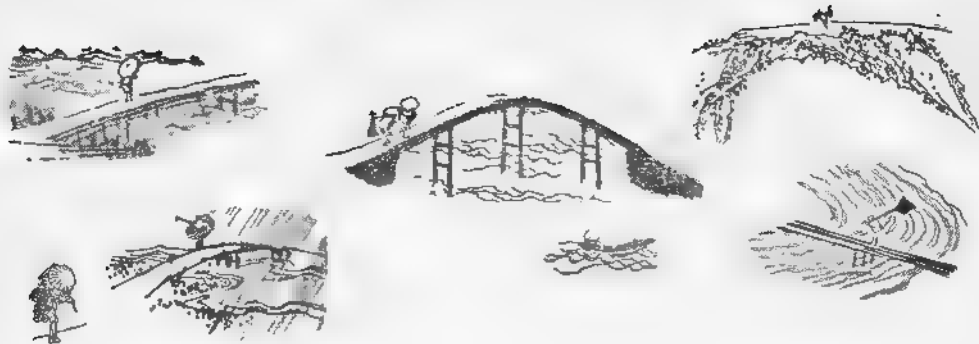
The practiced eye—and mine is not one of the best—could unquestionably find in the complete *Manga* at least a hundred similar precursors. It would be extraordinary if this were not the case, for Hokusai accomplished an enormous amount of work in his lifetime, and when planning a new print he must have drawn generously on his notebooks.

One of the more interesting examples of how an idea worked itself back and forth through Hokusai's consciousness is summarized on the following page. Most critics, and the general public, agree that one of Hokusai's supreme prints—one in which he combined both universal values and intimate, peasant observation—is "The Rush Gatherer," from the *Imagery of the Poets*. In this print an old workman crosses a bridge in the moon-filled dusk, carrying on his back a load of rushes. In most of the other prints of this series noblemen are the actors, but here the peasant dominates, a lonely, sweating figure lost in a magnificent landscape.

The print succeeds or fails depending upon the empathy with which the artist can endow his solitary figure, and the reason why so many observers acclaim this print is Hokusai's uncanny ability to infuse his workman with a universal significance. (The old man is worth a dozen of Millet's man with the hoe.)

One might be forgiven for thinking that Hokusai was lucky in having struck just the right note in his old man. But as the figures on page 258 show, Hokusai had been working upon this symbol for at least sixteen years before he did the print, and he made at least three sketchy versions at three widely separated periods. I have no doubt that, when all of Hokusai's drawings have one day been assembled, we will uncover two or three more essays of this subject.

This page of studies has an additional interest, for it illustrates the problems of chronology that perplex us in the later volumes. When were the drawings from Volumes XI and XIV executed? We don't know. Were



these two drawings studies for the color print, or did Hokusai dash them off as casual memories of that highly successful print? We don't know. Or were they students' copies of the great work, left behind in Hokusai's littered studio and picked up by the publisher for inclusion in the series? We don't know.

In similar manner, one could select almost any color print issued by Hokusai after 1820 and find among the collected drawings some one or two that relate to the print, or to parts of it. That a good many of these studies appeared in the *Manga* gives this series of books a special value, for if the drawings appeared in Volumes I-X, they can be assigned terminal dates which have to antecede the great color prints, and we are therefore able to follow Hokusai's artistic development. The *Manga* thus becomes



Print: 1831



III-3-L: 1815



XI-14-R: c. 1834



XIV-14-R: c. 1875



much more than a collection of amusing details; it has considerably more significance than foreseen by any of the writers who contributed the prefaces: it is a treasure house of insight. That scholars have not yet so used it merely indicates that substantial research into the problems of woodblock prints has not yet really begun. The future will surely see much use made of the *Manga*.

Equally interesting investigations can be made into Hokusai's dependence upon the earlier woodblock-printed drawing books of his predecessors, and into the manner in which his successors used the *Manga* as a gold mine of ideas out of which designs for great prints could be dug.

In the first case, the most surprising fact is that Hokusai seems to have borrowed very little from his eminent predecessor Sukenobu, whose books similar to the *Manga* were as popular in their day as Hokusai's were in his, and from whom generations of artists as gifted as Harunobu, Koryusai, and Kiyonaga continually borrowed. I have studied the *Manga* carefully for Sukenobu influences and have found few, the reason being, I think, that Hokusai found little in the soft, sweet Sukenobu that impressed him. In fact, both in his sketches and in his color prints Hokusai stands remarkably free from the influences of any of his woodblock predecessors, if one overlooks his earliest school pieces, especially his actor prints, in which he was required to copy set exercises. There are, however, echoes throughout the *Manga* of the *Mustard Seed Garden* and *Ten Bamboo Studio*, even though the author of the thirteenth preface denies this.

What occasions even more surprise, however, is the free manner in which Hokusai's contemporaries borrowed from the *Manga*. In the pages that follow I have reproduced only two striking examples: Hiroshige borrowed from Plates 183-84, and Kuniyoshi from Plates 185-86. Note also the digger of bamboo shoots at the head of this page (one of the Twenty-four Filial Sages not shown in Plates 105-6), which was the basis for a fine Kuniyoshi snowscape. Another twenty plates could have been offered showing how the *Manga* was utilized by others as source material.

Four plates which have already been discussed could have been used to show how woodblock artists borrowed from one another. Since all artists



handled the same themes repeatedly, borrowing became inevitable, and I recall an occasion when a careful editor telephoned me with some anxiety. "We're about to go to press," he said, "but I have been checking your story and find that you speak of Hokusai's *Thirty-six Views of Fuji* and Hiroshige's *Fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido*. My research material shows that Hiroshige did the *Views of Fuji* while Hokusai did the *Tokaido*."

He was correct. Had he searched further he could have found numerous other such series, each by some different artist. In fact, Hiroshige himself drew at least fifteen separate series duplicating his big success with the *Tokaido*, and many others attempted to cash in on his fame. This kind of borrowing was inherent in the woodblock tradition, as well as throughout all Oriental art, and must not be considered plagiarism.

For example, when Hokusai sketched the goddess who appears in Plates 99-100, he must have been aware that similar treatments had been issued years before, one of the most popular having been Harunobu's. Similarly, Plate 112 provides merely another version of love-crazy Seigen, who had been shown in a somewhat similar pose by Hokusai's own master, Shunsho. The pupil was certainly familiar with such forerunners, and his using of similar themes was not plagiarism.

On the other hand, when Hiroshige borrowed from the top diptych appearing on Plates 85-86, he lifted idea and design so studiously that he accomplished not only one of his finest prints, a poetic thing in muted blue shades, but plagiarism as well. Similarly, one of Kuniyoshi's most successful panel prints is the scene in his zodiac series representing the Sign of the Ox, in which he presents the killer Kidomaru hiding in wait inside an ox's skin in his attempt to assassinate Raiko. The conceit is a good one, and Kuniyoshi probably thought it up by himself; but when it came time to pose Kidomaru and to draw the picture, he went back to the *Manga*, where he had once spotted a fine design—see Plates 123-24.

I imagine that such plagiarism pleased Hokusai rather than angered him. After all, he had launched his series of books in a generous attempt to show others how to draw, and if his intentions were so obviously successful that full-fledged artists borrowed from him, he must have been gratified.

Plate 176. The relationships of the barrel-maker and the geisha in the lower left corner to Hokusai's color prints on the same subjects have already been discussed on page 256. But since in this section we are concerned with chronology—specifically, which came first, the sketch or the print—I shall endeavor to be as specific about dates as modern scholarship will allow.

Since these two drawings appeared in Volume III of the *Manga*, they must have been in being by 1815. The Fuji print containing the barrel-maker has been dated somewhere between 1823 and 1829. The print showing the drunken geisha has not been accurately dated but can be assigned tentatively to about 1825



Plate 177. This excellent historical sketch presents Kusunoki Masashige (1294–1336), a famous warrior known for his unswerving loyalty to the imperial throne. He defended Emperor Goduigo against such formidable foes as Hojo Takatoki and Ashikaga Takauji, meeting death in battle against the latter. In recent years his fame was revived as an example of the ideal Japanese

patriot, and many Japanese who fought with particular valor in World War II did so in the name of this exemplar.

This sketch, which can be dated as not later than 1816, is artistically related to a color print from the series *The Hundred Poems Explained by the Nurse* (launched in 1839). The print shows not Masashige but the exiled scholar Abe no Nakamaro, dreaming of home

while gazing out upon a Chinese landscape. Hokusai had used this same theme earlier with outstanding success when, in his *Imagery of the Poets* (issued about nine years before *The Hundred Poems*), he depicted Nakamaro in the pose shown on the opposite page.

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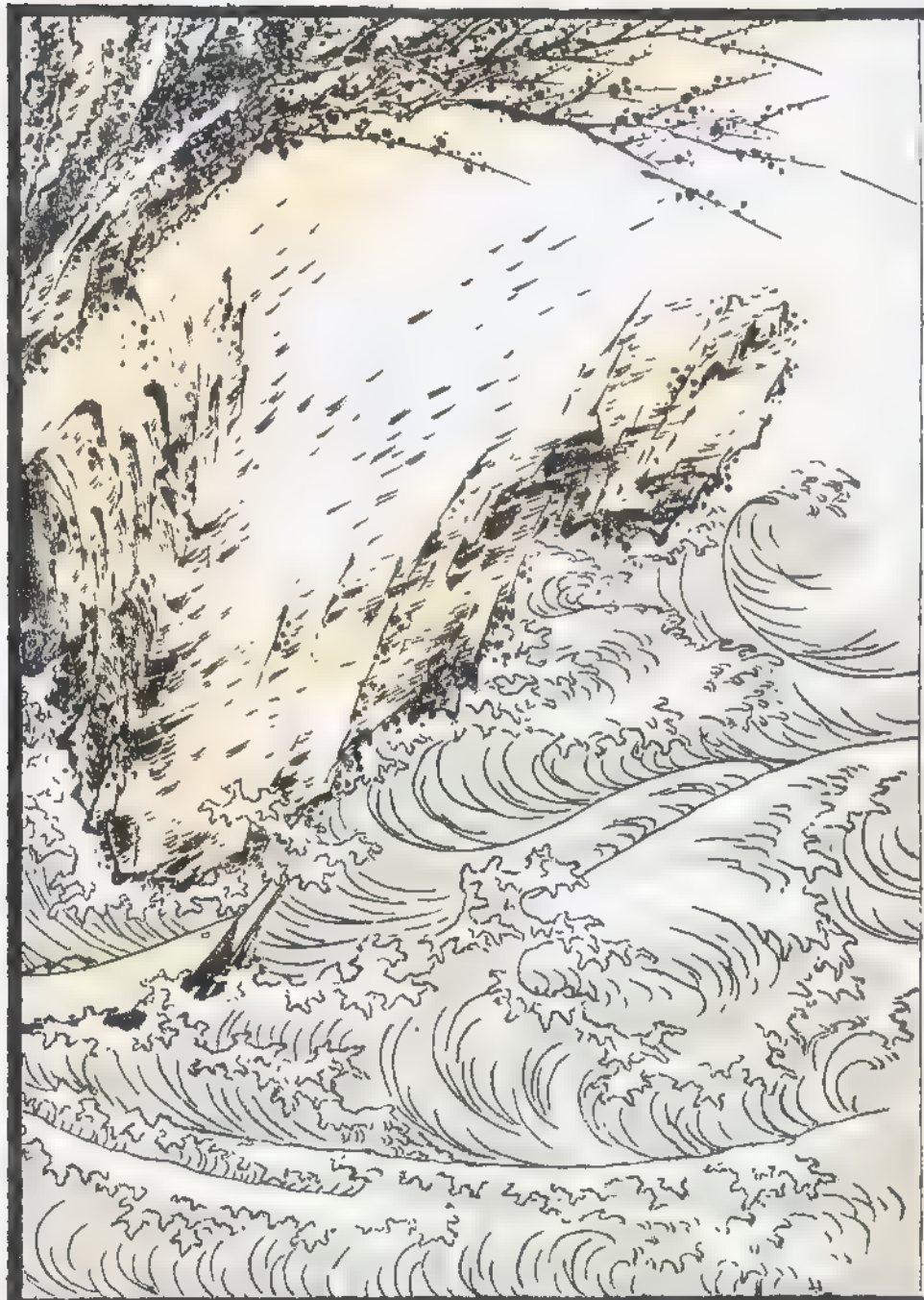
Plate 178. This lovely sketch shows the scholar Abe no Nakamaro pining for his Japanese homeland while serving the Chinese court. In 753 he was on his way home after having served 38 years in China, but his vessel was wrecked off An-nam and he remained the rest of his life in China. His most famous poem, entitled "Composed while looking at the moon in China," reads:

*Behold the moon!
Can it be the same that rises
Behind the mountain of Mikasa
on this spring night?*

This sketch, dated not later than 1816, is intimately related to the famous color print of the same subject and similar design in *Imagery of the Poets*, dated shortly after 1830



breaking wave surpasses in every respect this present version, as it does all the other Hokusai preliminary attempts in the same field.



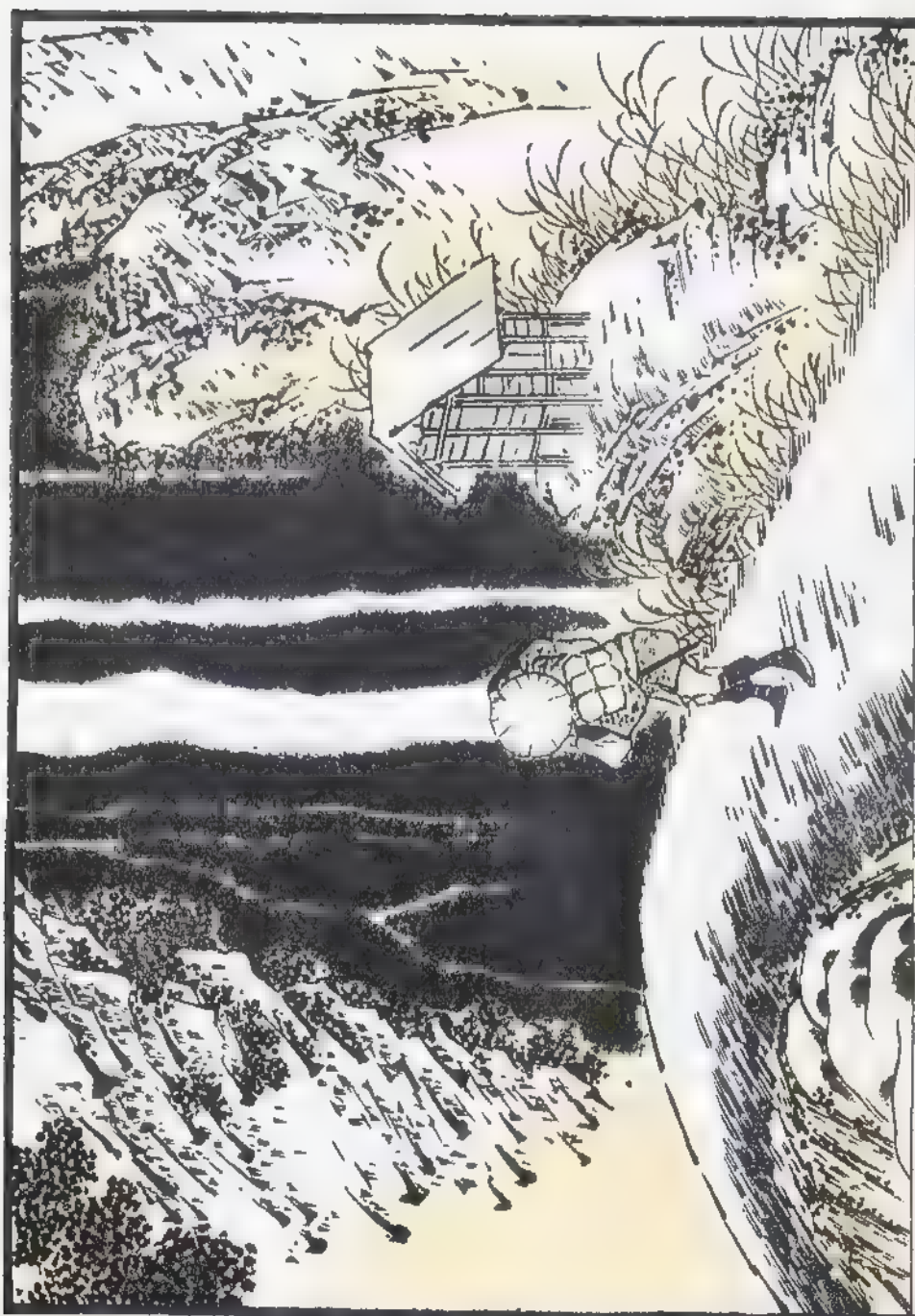
大波
江ノ浦
力
繪

Plates 181-82. This sketch of the Ono Falls, in Shinano Province (present Nagano Prefecture), bears a remarkably close relationship to the colored print of the same subject in the *Waterfalls* series. The drawing can be dated as not later than 1817, while the print probably appeared sometime between 1827 and 1830, although some European critics date it as much as eight years

later. In the colored print, which is a favorite of mine, the house is retained almost as drawn here; the bridge is kept pretty much as shown but skewed around to a different perspective; the solitary traveler is transformed into five resting laborers; while the rocky structures left and right are immensely improved in both drawing and placement. But the major change is in the

waterfall itself, for in the print its 90-foot drop is presented in superb futuristic style. Few pairs of sketches with their prints are more profitable to study than this one, for it demonstrates how an artist works in developing an idea. The Ono Falls are noted throughout Japan as comprising one of the eight famous views of the Kisokaido.





北の山に大木

Plates 183-84. This sketch, captioned "Evening shower at Sekiya in Shimo-osa Province," shows a scene in present Chiba Prefecture and can be dated not later than 1817. It recalls vividly a similar scene depicted by Hiroshige in 1833, the well-known "Yokkaichi" from the first *Fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido*. (See Plate 43 in *Hiroshige's Tokaido in Prints and Poetry*, Tuttle, 1957.) The

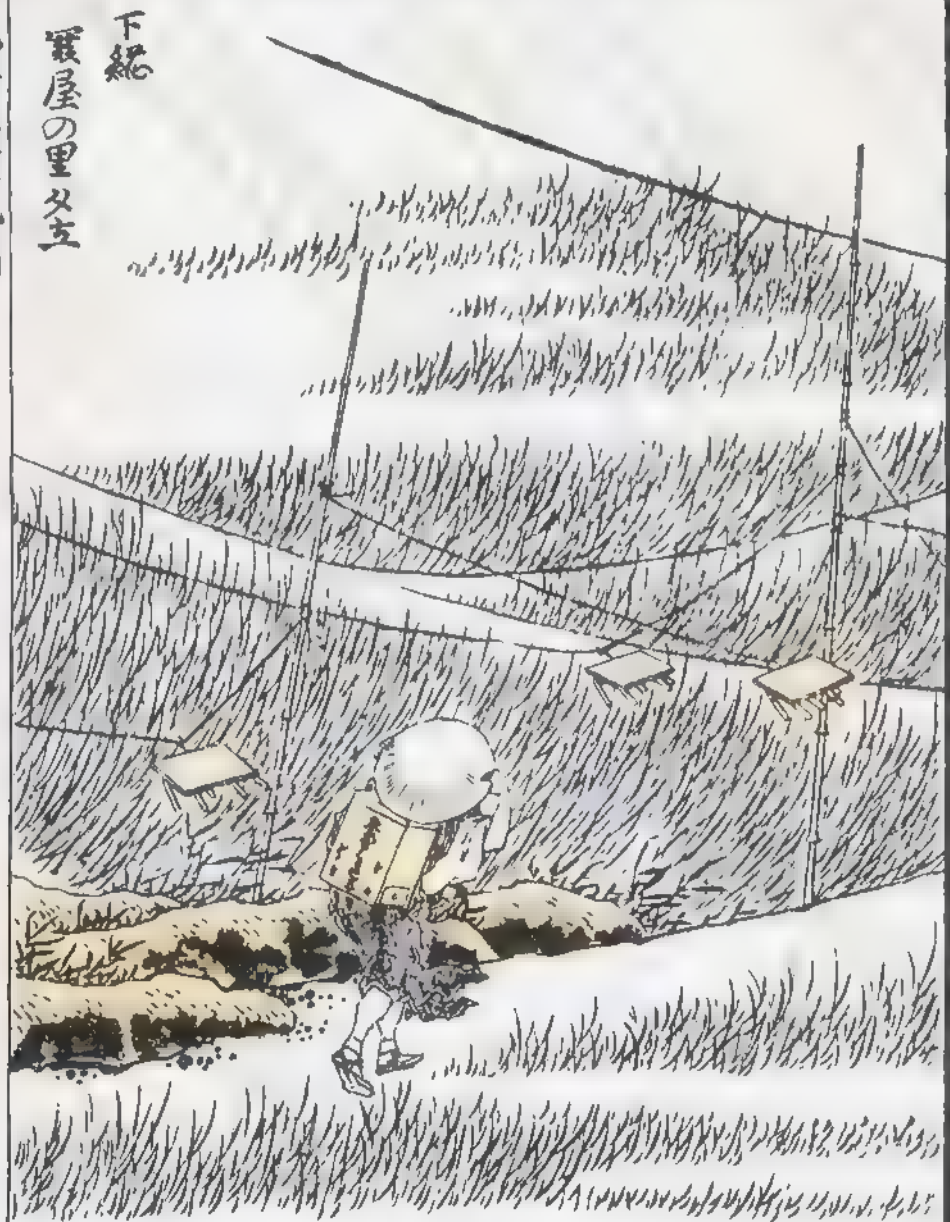
Hiroshige print is much superior to this, as is that artist's "Shonno" from the same series, which borrows from this treatment of rain and wind. (See Plate 10 in *Hiroshige*, Vol. 3 in *Library of Japanese Art*, Tuttle, 1956.) There is no intention of suggesting that Hiroshige plagiarized from Hokusai; the themes of woodblock artists were usually monotonously repetitious. But I

do think it essential that easy generalizations about Hiroshige's inventions in landscape art be checked against what Hokusai had already accomplished.

In this sketch a Buddhist monk struggles with the wind, while his acolyte follows, carrying on his back a box containing a traveling image of Amida, Buddha of Boundless Light. This box was an artistic device

比叡の里父立

下総
霞屋の里父立



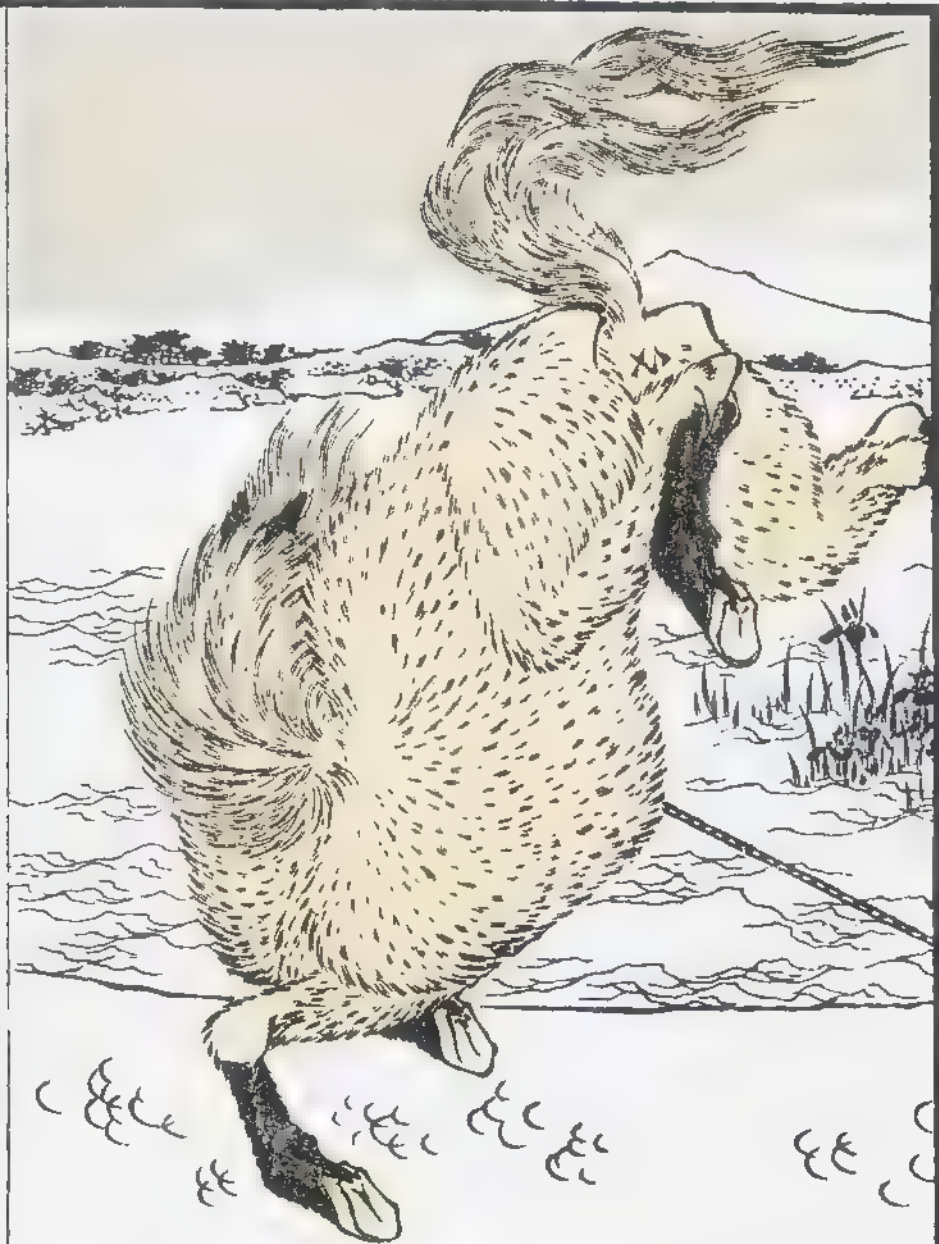
which Hiroshige was to use with much more telling effect, though in a Shinto context, in his print for 'Numazu' in the *Tokaido* set. (See Plate 9 in *Hiroshige, Vol. 3* in *Library of Japanese Art*, Tuttle, 1956.) Observe the noise-makers flopping in the wind, used to scare birds from the ripening rice.



Plates 185-86. This excellent sketch is captioned: "The strength of Kugatsume Kaneko of Kaizu in Omi Province." The incident is related in the same old book of folktales which carried the story of Plates 121-22. One day a famous warrior from the eastern part of Japan was traveling in the area around Kyoto and took time out for a swim in Lake Biwa. His spirited

horse, afraid of the water, ran away. Although there were many spectators who tried to stop the horse, none succeeded until the powerful courtesan Kaneko, or O-Kane, calmly stepped forth and planted her foot so firmly on the halter that her foot sank, high geta and all, ankle-deep into the sand, while the startled horse reared in impotent fury, unable to break loose.

This sketch, which can be dated not later than 1817, is striking in that Ichiyusai Kuniyoshi, often called Utagawa Kuniyoshi, in or about the year 1828, designed one of his two finest prints around this subject and utilized practically this same composition, interchanging the positions of the woman and the horse. Kuniyoshi's treatment is much superior to Hokusai's, for the drawing of



the woman produces a much stronger tension, plus the fact that the background is more powerfully treated. As contrasted to the case of Hiroshige, whose borrowings from Hokusai were what one might call legitimate, it seems to me that if the above dates can be accepted, and if it was indeed Kuriyoshi who did the borrowing rather than the other way around—a fact of which we

cannot be absolutely sure—then here we have an example of borrowing that comes close to plagiarism.



Plate 187. Hokusai captions these unpretentious sketches: "The Cow Rocks of Kai Province [present Yamaguchi Prefecture]," and "Inahana Point of Kai Province." The former recalls many other bridge studies and prints for both the *Famous Bridges* series and the *Views of the Ryukyu Islands*, although it is related to no one specific print. The bottom print, however, which

did not appear in the *Manga* until 1849 or 1850, is certainly connected in some manner with the superb color print of the fisherman which appears in the *Thirty-six Views of Fuji*, dated about 1823-29. This notable composition, my favorite in the *Fuji* series, shows the fisherman reversed from his position in the present print and supported by landscape, including Fuji-san, which is

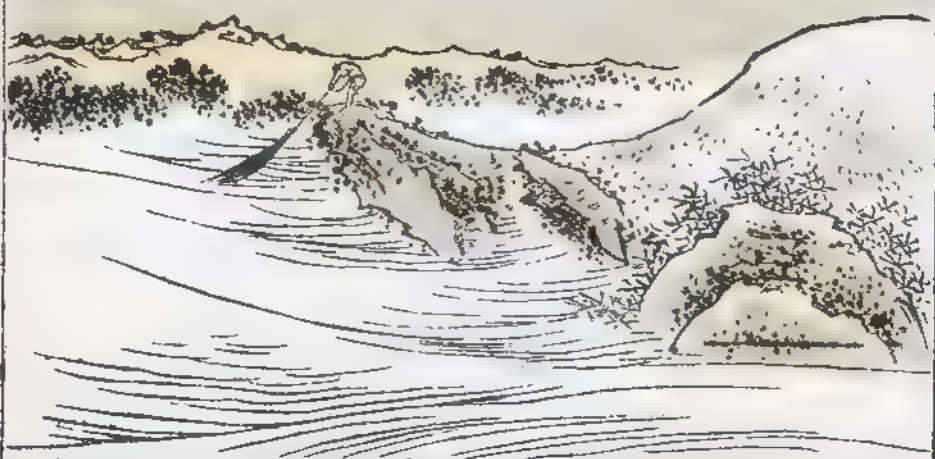
magnificently appropriate.

With this fisherman I reluctantly take my leave of the *Manga*, aware that another anthologist would have come up with an entirely different set of plates, differently organized and probably more wisely commented upon. But all would have been pleasurable for, above all else, the *Manga* sketches remain always a joy to behold.

甲
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石



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真



ODDMENTS

CAPTION RUNOVERS

Plate 109 (cont.). painting from which so many others have derived, as the subject became a popular theme for artists in both China and Japan. In Hokusai's day such portraits, painted in bright red, were used as charms against smallpox, which accounts for the number which have survived. Besides being a favorite subject of woodblock artists, the warrior's fierce features often appear among the martial dolls used in the Boys' Festival, and the Shoki story was also incorporated into a well-known Noh play.

Plate 116 (cont.). which saved the boys' lives or the enterprises of Kiyomori's mother which saved them is uncertain. We do know, however, that Kiyomori contented himself with banishing the boys to distant islands rather than following the murderous course which feudal prudence demanded. He did so to his sorrow.

Plate 119 (cont.). no Sukemasa (1944-98), considered one of Japan's three greatest calligraphers. Here he is painting one of the formal shrine signboards for which he was in great demand. 3) Ono Dofu (1896-966), likewise one of the big three, is seen here as a young man, watching a frog in much the same way that Robert the Bruce watched the spider building its web. Inspired by the frog's indefatigable efforts to reach the hanging branch of a willow, Dofu applied himself with utter perseverance to the painstaking

art of calligraphy. 4) Kojima Takanori, warrior and litterateur of the 14th century. When his emperor, Godaigo, was defeated and fleeing into exile, Takanori cut the bark from a cherry tree and, on the live wood, wrote a poem of unswerving loyalty. 5) Kobo Daishi (774-835), founder of the popular Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism, was also renowned as a calligrapher and the inventor of the *hiragana* syllabary, which, in some small way, freed the Japanese from their sole dependence upon the Chinese ideographs as a way of writing. He was also known as Gohitsu Osho, 'Five-Brush Monk,' because of his ability to paint as pictured here. 6) Ikkyu (1394-1481), famous Zen monk, calligrapher, artist, poet, and tea-ceremony master, is the subject of many popular legends. Once he won a contest to see who could write the largest character: he straddled a broom for a brush and wrote *shi* (written with a long vertical stroke with a slight hook at the end) on a tremendously long roll of paper. This feat must have made him a particular favorite of a Hokusai who in his youth was also much given to similar tours de force.

Plate 120 (cont.). landscape which were to appear later in his most celebrated works. Perhaps while there he did also paint Japanese landscapes for the Chinese, to assert even then, in an age when Japan was acknowledging its artistic and cultural subservience to China, the basic indestructibility of the Japanese spirit. The fact that

Sesshu signed some of his works as "Sesshu of Japan" is a further indication of the pride he took in his own country, but at the same time he was so pleased by the recognition he received in China that after his return to Japan he often signed works as "Occupant of the First Seat at T'ien-t'ung," a great center of Zen learning in China, where he had been given the seat of honor. Doubtless, like so many other Japanese before and after him, he was subject to conflicting feelings of deep patriotism and, at the same time, of intense admiration for a foreign country. In any case, to return to our point, there exists an ancient record saying: "Once Sesshu sketched for a certain man [in China] three famous [Japanese] scenes—Mount Fuji, Miho Bay, and Kiyomi Temple."

Plate 130 (cont.). The nobles are carried from place to place by the commoners by means of a pole passed through the holes in the middles. 3) Facing the foregoing is "Three heads." 4) The two tiny people upper left are "Midgets," said to be under 10 inches high and to go about in large numbers to protect themselves from "sea cranes," whose favorite prey they are. 5) The dog-headed man below the L'Impuans is captioned "Dog Country." 6) The man lower left is "Tattooed body." 7) 'Long legs' is said to inhabit a remote province of China, next to the country of the Long-arms. With 18-foot legs and 12-foot arms, the two tribes cooperate, Long-legs carrying Long-arms on

their shoulders and wading into the sea to catch fish.

8) The posing gentlemen near the center of the page is "Long ears."

Plate 154 (cont.). to market in a two-wheeled cart, giving Hokusai a chance to show us how wheels are made. A group of workmen or, perhaps, religious-minded laymen, all dressed in matching happi coats for the occasion, haul an important beam into place for the erection of a shrine. And, finally, out of sheer exuberance,

Hokusai adds two toys – a fish cart and a six-armed windmill.

Plate 156 (cont.).

7) "Square going." 8) "Advance, Retreat."

The sketches: 1) "Stone-throwing shelf." 2) The four cardinal directions are given in *I Ching* terminology and then, in the center, presumably referring to the shape a military formation should take in such terrain: "Rear, high and short. Front, low and long."

3) "Fan-shaped water turret." 4) "Drawbridge."

Plate 172 (cont.). is if you keep these relationships in mind. The crossed lines in the center are formed by joining the 4 seasons; the proportions of the horizontal crossbars are set by the 5 elements; the two vertical pillars are the Yang and Yin; and the octagonal cross-section of the base upon which each pillar stands is obviously derived from the 8 directions. There are also numerous other interlocking ideas, all forming a wonderful jumble of mysticism, superstition, carpenters' rules of thumb, and good design.

BREAKDOWN OF PLATES

The following table shows the breakdown, according to original *Manga* volume numbers and anthology categories, of the plates reproduced in the preceding pages. Figures in the body of the table refer to plate numbers used in this anthology, with a hyphen indicating when a pair of plates is covered by a single caption. The total number of plates taken from each *Manga* volume is given at the right; and of plates in each category, at the bottom

Vol.No.	Insert	People	Fauna	Flora	Landscape
I		7, 8, 14, 21, 22, 39	40, 41-42, 43	60, 62	78, 80
II		6, 13			77, 81-82, 85-86
III		9, 10, 11, 12, 29, 33	44	61, 63	75, 79
IV			45, 46, 47-48	66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71-72	76
V					95-96
VI		31, 32, 34, 35	49, 50		
VII			51, 52	73	83-84, 93-94, 97
VIII	1-2, 3	4, 5, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 30		65	74
IX		16			87-88, 89-90
X		23-24, 37-38			
XI		28			
XII		25-26, 27, 36			
XIII			55-56, 59		
XIV			53, 54, 57-58		91-92
XV				64	
Totals	3	36	20	14	24

The Past	Grotesque	Technical	Architecture	Forerunners	Totals
			168		15
117		147, 153, 154, 165	171		13
101, 102, 109	130, 145	152, 155, 163-64		176	21
98		149-50	167		16
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105-6		159-60, 161-62	173-74		21
107, 116, 121-22, 123-24, 125-26		146, 156		185-86	17
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	141-42				8
					1
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT IS impossible to determine the complete printing history of the *Hokusai Manga*. Not only did the original volumes appear over a space of sixty-five years, but they were issued under the imprints of several different publishers. The original blocks, some of which may have been carved under Hokusai's personal supervision, were used for innumerable reprintings, often in rushed and careless form. In time the blocks wore down to a point of such obvious fuzziness that even the publishers had to admit that the tired wood had served its day. Gradually, and probably block by block rather than book by book, old blocks had to be discarded and new ones cut. In this manner new editions were issued combining pages printed from both old blocks and new, and they have continued to be issued right down to the present. Even Japan's most scholarly experts can often only guess as to the exact history of any single volume that is presented to them for appraisal. I myself have learned to avoid giving even an opinion in such matters.

Another fact makes finding a mint copy of the first edition almost impossible. These volumes were books to be read and pored over by the average citizen—and his children. They were not stored away in libraries or museums. Thus practically every example of an early printing is certain to be thumb-stained, dog-eared, and sometimes tattered to the point of illegibility. Therefore, in order to obtain the reproductions offered in this anthology we have had to select carefully from a number of volumes; and we were fortunate to have placed at our disposal several *Manga* sets patiently and expertly assembled over many years by three different distinguished scholars: Dr. Shizuya Fujikake, the dean of woodblock experts; Mr. Nakasuke Tsuihiji, long-time collector of Hokusai material; and Dr. Richard Lane, to whom I am also indebted for the translations of the prefaces appearing on pages 13 and 22–30. My sincere thanks go to these generous men.

Our aim in the reproductions has been, not to please the antiquarian in his love for the patina and thumbprints of time, but to make available Hokusai's sketches, insofar as possible, as they must have looked when first issued by the artist's original publishers. Thus, while always reproducing from copies printed from the original blocks, we have eliminated the tears, stains, and worm holes; have brightened the faded colors; and, in general, have aimed at the mint-condition appearance of the sketches as found in the edition published in Kyoto at the end of the nineteenth century from a completely recarved set of blocks, as that edition, even though inaccurate in some carving details, achieved a startling accuracy of feeling.

I wish also to acknowledge my heavy debt for help received in deciphering

the subject matter of the *Manga* sketches. Mr. Ichitaro Kondo, the distinguished expert of the Tokyo National Museum, has been as generous with his aid this time as in our previous collaborations; he searched out explanations for many of the more esoteric subjects. The staff members of the Charles E. Tuttle Company, including Miss Kyoko Kaneko, Mr. Meredith Weatherby, and, particularly, Mr. Kaoru Ogimi, have proved a fountainhead of information from the moment I started to work on this book right up to the time of going to press. But in spite of all this help I have occasionally been forced to admit, as I do in the caption to Plate 146, that some of Hokusai's intentions remain obscure. Also, in the caption to Plates 81-82 I make my apologia for the errors and omissions which my captions are certain to contain; but here I should like to stress the fact that such errors stem from my work, and not from that of my helpful friends. I must bear the final responsibility in that sometimes I have preferred my interpretation of a sketch to theirs, and have insisted upon my version over their protests.

I am indebted to Mr. Keishichi Ishiguro, of Tokyo, both for permission to reproduce the portrait of Hokusai which appears on the title page and for the following information concerning it. The original, a brush-drawn self-portrait, was destroyed in the fires following the Great Earthquake of 1923. Fortunately, in the late nineteenth century its owner, Mr. Bunshichi Kobayashi, had had a few copies made by wood blocks, which had then been touched up by hand to produce faithful facsimiles. Two of these copies found their way to Paris: the one reproduced here, which Mr. Ishiguro brought back to Japan, and the one which is now in the Louvre.

The decorations at the heads of text pages have been selected and arranged by Mr. Masakazu Kuwata. Each has been lifted from some page of the *Manga* not appearing in this anthology, and where possible each relates to its accompanying text; the sizes of these decorations, however, have been altered to suit the layout. The typography and book design are the work of Mr. Weatherby, who shares with me the joy I find in the *Manga*. He has also exercised editorial responsibility with patience and understanding throughout this long project.

Tokyo, April, 1958

JAMES A. MICHENER

INDEX

Note: References are to page numbers. No effort has been made to index all the subjects depicted in the plates, but only those mentioned in text or captions. In the case of a diptych, both page numbers are given, irrespective of the page on which the caption reference itself appears.

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